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The founding of the permanent denominational colleges in Virginia, 1776-1861

Stuart Bowe Medlin

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THE FOUNDING OF THE PERMANENT DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGES
IN VIRGINIA, 1776-1861

by
Stuart Bowe Medlin

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Degree of Doctor of Education
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Williamsburg, Virginia

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THE FOUNDING OF THE PERMANENT DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGES
IN VIRGINIA, 1776-1861

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The founding of the permanent denominational colleges in Virginia between 1776 and 1861 provides some insight into the common objectives and problems shared by the various American Protestant groups. Anxious to perpetuate themselves, eager to proselytize new members and advance their respective tenets and beliefs, the various Protestant groups in America found the period after the Revolution particularly propitious for achieving these goals. The establishment of colleges was but one avenue for effecting their goals and ambitions.

When the Revolution ended, the nation could boast of nine colleges,¹ all having been founded by Protestant groups committed to the spirit of the Reformation, that man must personally accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour and that to do this he had to understand His teachings. This commitment to the Bible had fostered early an interest in education as a responsibility of religion. The early colonial colleges emerged as Congregationalists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians sought to train ministers and potential colonial leaders in a religious, moral environment. A phrase inscribed on the west gateway of Harvard Yard seems to state simply the primary reason for

these first institutions:

TO ADVANCE LEARNING
AND PERPETUATE IT TO POSTERITY
DREADING TO LEAVE AN ILLITERATE MINISTRY
TO THE CHURCHES WHEN OUR PRESENT
MINISTERS SHALL LIE IN DUST.²

Although Puritan beliefs were strong in colonial New England, these beliefs were often challenged by secular ideas emanating from eighteenth century Deism. The philosophical thoughts of Diderot and Voltaire were well known among American literati, those whose views helped shape the formation of a republican form of government. Men like Jefferson, Franklin and Adams stand as testimonials to growing secular interests.³ Indeed, some of the Constitutional drafters advanced the idea of a national university, but colonial tradition was on the side of states' rights and the proposal failed.⁴ States of course did establish state universities that were supposedly non-sectarian. North Carolina as early as 1776 chartered a state university; Virginia's own university, the enlightened dream of Jefferson, was chartered in 1819. Yet many Reformation Protestants looked skeptically on these as "hot beds of antitheistic rationalism and loose living, certain to corrupt the morals of the young men committed to their charge."⁵

The Reformation zeal was early advocated in the new nation of America. President Witherspoon of Princeton joined with President Stiles of Yale in acknowledging that God had indeed blessed America, but "the work of reformation which had elicited divine favor must be continued."⁶

For all of America's churches, the immediate post war years were periods of adjustment, organization and reorganization. American independence created new demands on denominations. The need to provide their own ministers and the inability to control the skepticism and atheism believed to be permitted in state colleges convinced the denominations that colleges established and operated under their own auspices were necessary and expedient. Religious leaders in the popular, more emotional Methodist and Baptist denominations looked with alarm at institutions operated by the state or by Anglicans (Episcopalians).⁷ One mid-nineteenth century remark about William and Mary suggested it to have been "the hotbed of French politics and religion. I can truly say that then (c. 1800) and for some years after in every educated young man in Virginia whom I met I expected to find a sceptic, if not an avowed unbeliever."⁸ As Professor Winthrop Hudson stated: the goal of Protestant denominations "was a Christian nation."⁹ Operating in an environment of national ambition, democratic aspiration, geographic isolation, and romantic imagination, "they [denominations] turned their own rivalries into sets of competing colleges."¹⁰

Between 1800 and 1835 the churches seemed to be accomplishing this goal. Church membership increased from about 40 percent of the population in 1800 to 75 percent in 1835.¹¹ While visiting America in 1831, Alexis de Togueville remarked that "there is no country in the world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence

over the souls of men than in America."¹² The freedom accorded religion in the new Republic enabled denominations to proliferate and grow. It allowed them to found colleges as they perceived the need, whether actual or not.

As settlers pushed west to the Appalachian Mountains and beyond, religious groups were confronted with the task of providing ministers and morally sound lay leaders.¹³ Revivalistic preaching had typically been the way of gathering the wandering sheep into the fold on the frontier. A revival among students at Hampden-Sydney and Washington College in 1787 sparked a fire that burned for at least three decades, spreading from South to North and West to East.¹⁴ Individuals were emotionally aroused to accept Christ and join the Christian forces; of course, each denomination advocated its own brand of salvation.¹⁵ Thus this Second Great Awakening not only aroused Christians to renew their faith and attracted new membership, it also created and intensified rivalry among the various groups, a rivalry that logically extended to the founding of colleges since here was where leadership, both religious and civil, for denominationalism was trained. Of the one hundred and eighty-two permanent colleges and universities founded before the Civil War in sixteen states, one hundred and sixty had religious affiliations.¹⁶ These colleges were the dream of an individual minister or a few men who envisioned their respective institution to be the haven of Christianity, morality, and in a narrower sense, denominationalism.

The founding of the permanent denominational colleges in Virginia is but a part of the story of the Second Great Awakening. Since the spark for the revival was set in Virginia, since the oldest permanent Methodist College is there,¹⁷ and since up to 1820 Virginia was the largest state in the nation,¹⁸ private denominational college founding in the state is an important chapter in the story of American higher education between the Revolution and Civil War.

In 1693 Virginia established its first permanent college, William and Mary; as the nation's second oldest English speaking college, it enabled the Anglican colony to train at home its ministers as well as the sons of well-to-do settlers. When Virginia and her sister colonies separated from England in 1776 (i.e., the Declaration of Independence was adopted), each colony had to establish its own state constitution. The 1776 Virginia State Constitution, besides establishing a legal framework of government, also had an impact on higher education. By disestablishing the Anglican Church as the official religion in the state, the College of William and Mary began to lose its privileged status, one that resulted from its being an arm of the church.¹⁹ Thus the groundwork was laid for the other denominations in the state to found their own institutions of higher education, primarily to provide the proper environment for the education of their respective ministers, as well as the sons of well-to-do settlers for civil and professional occupations.

Considering the fact that only sons of whites were eligible to attend college, the need to establish colleges should be examined with

reference to this criterion. The total white, male population base in Virginia was estimated in 1790 at 27,734 in the 16-21 age distribution.²⁰ Examination of enrollments at William and Mary between 1786 and 1861 reveals a range from 8 to 142, with a mean attendance of 55 enrollees during the seventy-two years for which records are available.²¹ And not until after 1861 were women or blacks a factor in college admissions; why then did the state experience a proliferated chartering and founding of colleges between 1776 and 1861? During this eighty-five year period twenty-nine collegiate level institutions were chartered by Virginia's Protestant denominations;²² and during these same years two state-supported public institutions of higher education, the University of Virginia, established in 1819, and Virginia Military Institute, established in 1839, were founded to meet the needs of the state's college eligible white males.

Between 1776 and 1861, Virginia's principal Protestant denominations struggled to charter and erect one or more colleges, primarily to educate ministers to interpret the Bible and to minister to the masses according to the tenets of that particular denomination. Of the twenty-nine denominational colleges chartered between 1776 and 1861, only seven have survived to the present day, a fact that suggests lack of actual need and support. Denominational rivalry should also be included as a reason for their deaths, as well as unfavorable location and internal disputes.²³ In Virginia,

Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Disciples of Christ (Christians), and Lutherans all strove to establish institutions in which their tenets and beliefs could be professed and instilled in the minds of their respective ministers. Their denominational zeal and narrow pettiness, however, often led to rivalry that at times was both foolish and ugly.²⁴

Table 1 follows in which selected data are presented about the seven permanently established colleges.²⁵

TABLE 1
SELECTED DATA, DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGES
FOUNDED IN VIRGINIA, 1776-1861

College	Year Chartered	Location	Religious Affiliation
1. Washington College	1782	Lexington	Presbyterian
2. Hampden-Sydney	1783	Hampden-Sydney	Methodist
3. Randolph-Macon	1830	Boydton (Ashland)	Methodist
4. Emory and Henry	1839	Emory	Methodist
5. Bethany	1840	Bethany (W. Va.)	Disciples of Christ
6. Richmond	1840	Richmond	Baptist
7. Roanoke	1853	Salem	Lutheran

The purpose of this study was to describe and to draw some conclusions about the founding of the permanently established denominational colleges in Virginia between 1776 and 1861. The date 1776 was selected as the beginning date of the study because prior to that date Virginia was a part of the British colonial system and supported the Anglican Church as the Established Church in the colony. Therefore dissident religious groups often operated with some difficulty within the state, and were inhibited in creating church organizations capable of establishing collegiate institutions. The year 1861 has been selected as a terminal date for the study because in that year Virginia seceded from the Union and became part of the Confederate States of America. The great proliferation of colleges that had occurred between the American Revolution and the Civil War virtually ended with that struggle; and when the war ended in 1865, Virginians were too engaged in physical reconstruction to found new colleges for several years.

This study will focus principally on the following three considerations:

1. The historical events related to the chartering of each of the seven permanent denominational colleges in Virginia between 1776 and 1861;
2. The reasons these colleges were chartered;
3. The interdenominational rivalry among the seven Protestant groups engaged in college founding.

For the purposes of this study a private denominational college is an institution that was founded by a Protestant sect to offer post-secondary schooling and empowered by the state to confer degrees. The term private will indicate that the state did not exercise any organizational or administrative jurisdiction over the institution except as formally stated in its charter issued by the state legislature. Governance of a private institution is vested in an independent, self-perpetuating or church controlled board. The term permanent indicates the institution has continued to operate since its founding to the present year (1975); its name, location or denominational association in several cases has changed.

Board minutes of the colleges, correspondence of individuals associated with the institutions' chartering and establishment, charters of incorporation, church records and newspapers have constituted the principal primary sources. College histories and scholarly works on education, religion and religious education were the major secondary sources utilized.

In this study the author has devoted a chapter to describing the events relating to the college founding efforts of each denomination. In the final chapter, conclusions are presented about the establishment of the permanent denominational colleges in Virginia between 1776 and 1861. Since the Presbyterians were the first to charter and establish a college in Virginia after the Revolution, their efforts are presented first.

Chapter I: Footnotes

¹Donald G. Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 16, 32-33; Ellwood P. Cubberly, A Brief History of Education (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922), pp. 388-389.

²Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1944), p. 227.

³W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), p. 65; S. Alexander Ripa, Education in A Free Society (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 49-67; Tewksbury, Founding of American Colleges and Universities, pp. 56-57.

⁴Ripa, Education in A Free Society, p. 67.

⁵George J. Stevenson, Increase in Excellence: A History of Emory and Henry College, 1836-1963 (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 26.

⁶Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 111.

⁷Tewksbury, Founding of Colleges and Universities, pp. 60-61, 67-69; Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 109-111.

⁸Bishop W. Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1931 (c. 1857)). Vol. I, p. 29.

⁹Hudson, Religion in America, p. 129.

¹⁰Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 54.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

¹²Tewksbury, Founding of Colleges and Universities, pp. 67-68.

¹³Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University, pp. 54-62.

¹⁴For a general account of the "Second Awakening" see B. A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958), pp. 3-158.

¹⁵Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 133-135. For further general support of the denominationalism in college founding, see Cubberlay, History of Education, p. 390; Rudolph, The American College and University, pp. 54-55; Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1947 (c. 1920), p. 165; James Truslow Adams, The Epic of America (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1932), p. 127.

¹⁶Tewksbury, Founding of Colleges and Universities, pp. 54-56. Of the 516 colleges reported by Tewksbury, thirty-two were in Virginia. Twenty-two of these were no longer in existence at the time Tewksbury conducted his study, indicating a mortality rate of 69 percent. The average mortality rate among the sixteen states studied was 81 percent. Tewksbury, Founding of Colleges and Universities, p. 28.

¹⁷Randolph-Macon, chartered in 1830, is the oldest living Methodist College in America. Hudson, Religion in America, p. 155.

¹⁸U. S. Bureau of the Census, A Century of Population Growth From the First Census of the United States to the Twelfth (Baltimore: Geneological Publishing Company, 1967), p. 57.

¹⁹Sadie Bell, The Church, The State and Education in Virginia (New York: Arno Press, 1969 (c. 1930), pp. 151-243. For additional information on religious freedom in Virginia between 1776 and 1786 (The Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom), see Dumas Malone, Jefferson the Virginian (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1948), pp. 274-280.

²⁰Bureau of the Census, A Century of Population Growth, pp. 82, 140.

²¹Thomas Jefferson in his Notes on the State of Virginia, c. 1783, estimated in 1782 that free white males between 16 and 21 constituted about one fourth of the total male population over 16 (pp. 94-95); using this same one-fourth percentage I have estimated the 16-21 population distribution for 1790. The total free white male population sixteen or over in Virginia was reported to be 110,936 in the 1790 census. Heads of Families, First Census of the United States: 1790 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 8.

²²Lyon G. Tyler, Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capital
(Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1906), p. 269.

²³Tewksbury, Founding of Colleges and Universities, p. 28.

²⁴Ibid., p. 22.

²⁵Rudolph, The American College and University, p. 70.

²⁶Tewksbury, Founding of American Colleges and Universities,
pp. 32-42.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESBYTERIANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

Of all the religious denominations, the most fervent one in the field of college founding was the Presbyterian. Before the Civil War they had founded in the United States forty-nine out of 207 colleges listed by Donald Tewksbury.¹ This Presbyterian interest in an educated ministry reflects its Calvinistic heritage from Europe. Thus as Scotch and Scotch-Irish emigrants arrived in significant numbers during the eighteenth century and effected permanent settlement, usually west of the established Eastern coastline, they developed a desire to provide suitable educational institutions that would inculcate Presbyterian values. The development of their so called "Log Colleges" occupies an important place in the founding and growth of frontier education in America. Their interest in college founding may be noted from the fact that they established institutions in twenty-one of the thirty-four states in the Union before the Civil War;² and of the sixty-six colleges founded during this period in the South, forty-seven were established by Presbyterians, the first being in Virginia.³

The mother of colleges for the Presbyterians was Princeton, founded in 1746 as the College of New Jersey; established largely

as the result of a split among members of the sect over the role of the minister, the church's evangelical spirit and minor doctrinal issues, Princeton appeared through the efforts of the liberal faction, known as the New Side or New Lights. These New Side Presbyterians were the principal source of inspiration and influence in Virginia's Presbyterian movement, especially as related to education.⁴

The first Presbyterian minister to be authorized to preach in Virginia was Francis Makemie, a dissenter from the Church of England. A native of Ireland, his family had emigrated there from Scotland, thus he may be considered a Scotch-Irishman. Very little is known about him except through ecclesiastical records, but his ministry brought him in the 1680's to Barbadoes, Maryland and Virginia's Eastern Shore. Marrying the daughter of a well-to-do Eastern Shore merchant, Makemie enjoyed material comfort, a factor which certainly contributed to his success in organizing Presbyterian groups from the Eastern Shore of Maryland south to Norfolk.⁵

While his efforts were only meekly supported after his death in 1708, they served as the seeds for active sectarian growth during and after the Great Awakening.⁶

During the 1720's and 1730's poverty and religious intolerance drove thousands of Scotch-Irish to America, most settling in the Middle Atlantic states, especially Pennsylvania. As their numbers increased, primarily through emigration, many moved south through the Shenandoah Valley into the upper South, including Virginia. As these

Scotch-Irish moved into the Shenandoah Valley during the 1730's and 1740's, they established churches, including one on Buffalo Creek in Prince Edward County and another at Timber Ridge in Rockbridge County, then a part of Augusta County. Since Virginia was a Royal Colony and the Anglican Church the official religion, permission to found churches that advanced the Presbyterian cause had to be secured from the government. In 1738 a group of Presbyterians requested the Synod of Philadelphia to petition the state government to approve their desire to build churches. Governor Gooch approved their request, probably considering their concentration in the Shenandoah Valley a defense measure more than one of religion. He probably gave little consideration to the possibility of religious collisions, since most of the Scotch-Irish settlers were removed from the established eastern settlements.⁷

By 1740 the effects of the Great Awakening led by John Tennent and Jonathan Edwards spread to Virginia. Through the influence of two New Side churchmen, William Robinson and Samuel Davies, the revival spirit invaded the state. The evangelist Samuel Davies, later to serve as President of Princeton,⁸ exerted the principal revival influence, assisted by the Reverend William Robinson who died in 1746, leaving his accomplishments to the acumen of Davies. Like other Presbyterians, the Virginia Presbyterians split into New and Old Side factions, a split that caused several Presbyterian groups in the state to associate with the liberal Synod of New York, rather than the New Side conservatives who controlled the Philadelphia Synod. While the

two synods were reconciled eventually, the significance of the split at this time lay in the acceptance of the more liberal interpretation of faith by various congregations in Virginia, an interpretation that accepted and encouraged the need for Presbyterian education.⁹

A further move toward Presbyterian involvement in higher education in Virginia occurred in 1755 when the Synod of New York directed six Presbyterian ministers, including Samuel Davies and the Reverend John Brown, pastor of Timber Ridge Church in Rockbridge County (then part of Augusta County), to form the Presbytery of Hanover. Through the collective efforts of this Presbytery and the zeal of Davies and Brown, the first two Presbyterian colleges of higher education were established in the South.¹⁰

That the Presbyterians should be the first non-Anglican denomination to engage in college founding in the state was to be expected. No other non-Anglican group enjoyed the intellectual leadership or economic affluence that they commanded. The Baptists were too engrossed in political organization to promote educational programs other than fundamental religious instruction. The Methodists, the only other group that might have become involved in educational activities at the time, were more interested in proselyting members to their newly structured denomination.¹¹

The seeds for the first Presbyterian college were germinated in a classical academy founded in 1749 by Robert Alexander. Since Liberty Hall Academy was founded in 1749, and formally chartered in 1782 "to grant to such students, as in their opinion merit

(recognition), testimonials (may be issued) under the common seal, and signed by the Rector and three of the Trustees at least, reciting their literary degrees,"¹² and since twelve received B.A. degrees in 1785,¹³ Washington College (Washington and Lee) warrants the distinction of being the second oldest permanent college in Virginia.¹⁴

Alexander had settled in Augusta County about 1743. Holding a M.A. from Dublin University, Alexander recognized the need to provide local education, the impracticality and expense of sending students to distant schools being a tremendous burden on the western settlers. His academy was located about two miles southwest of Greenville, and not too distant from Staunton.¹⁵

The purpose of the academy was "To teach the rudiments of the mother tongue, to teach the reading of the Bible, the Larger and Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession, . . ."¹⁶ This emphasis on Presbyterian doctrine was characteristic of the denominational academies and colleges founded during this era and well into the nineteenth century.¹⁷

In 1753 the Reverend John Brown, a 1749 graduate of Princeton, accepted the pastorate of Timber Ridge and New Providence Churches, and thus became Alexander's minister. This association led Brown to develop an interest in the academy and soon thereafter the school moved to Old Providence, then to New Providence Church; shortly before the Revolution the academy located at Mt. Pleasant, about a mile west of Fairfield in Rockbridge County.¹⁸

In 1771 the Hanover Presbytery's interest in higher education was stimulated by a 1769 graduate of Princeton, Samuel Stanhope Smith. While visiting Virginia that year, Smith observed the need for Presbyterian instruction and urged the Hanover Presbytery to actively support the effort. Preaching in Prince Edward, Cumberland and Charlotte Counties, Smith stimulated interest in education among local Presbyterians. The ultimate result was support of Alexander's academy, the germ of Washington and Lee University, and the founding of Hampden-Sydney College.¹⁹ One might say that the spirit of Princeton operating through its graduates--men like Samuel Stanhope Smith, his brother John Blair Smith and William Graham--kindled the flames for collegiate institutions in Virginia.

By 1774 the Presbytery had decided that a school should be founded in Augusta County, the definite location to be determined from the recommendations of the education committee. A member of the committee, the Rev. John Brown, invited the group to visit the academy that had been founded by John Alexander. As a result Brown was appointed by the Presbytery as its principal tutor, his salary to be paid by the church. During 1775 and early 1776 the group prepared their recommendations; convinced of the proficiency of the students at the academy to exhibit their knowledge of Greek and Latin, satisfied with the teachers, and impressed by Brown's interest in the academy convinced the other members of the committee that this should be the recipient of Presbyterian support. Thus on May 6, 1776, the Presbytery assumed full control of the school, which was moved from

Mt. Pleasant to Timber Ridge. Reasons for this were (1) convenient location, (2) land had been donated by two residents, (3) neighbors agreed to build a log house 28 x 24 feet, 1 1/2 stories high, (4) firewood and timber for future buildings were promised by the residents for twenty years and (5) the Presbytery's satisfaction that the minister of the Timber Ridge Church, William Graham, a 1773 graduate of Princeton who had moved there in 1774 would be an appropriate rector or principal. His assistant, John Montgomery, was a 1775 Princeton graduate.²⁰

The first board of trustees included five Presbyterian ministers (one being the rector) and nineteen Presbyterian lay members. A quorum required seven who had the duties of selecting the rector and his assistant, collecting money and subscriptions, spending the money, keeping financial records and conducting "all the Concerns of this Academy in behalf of the Presbytery" who reserved "the rights of Visitation forever."²¹

Despite the commencement of the Revolution, the Augusta Academy opened under Presbyterian management in 1776. At the first meeting of the board of trustees after the Battle of Lexington, the name of the academy was changed to Liberty Hall, either because it was the name of the country home in Ireland of the school's principal trustee, John Brown, or because of patriotic zeal.²² The original trustees were all Presbyterians²³ and included among their membership four who had been members of the board appointed by the Presbytery between 1776 and 1782.²⁴ The four were William Alexander, Alexander Campbell,

Col. John Wilson and Col. William McKee. Wilson was an Augusta County farmer and Presbyterian lay leader; McKee, a native of Rockbridge County, served in the Virginia legislature and was High Sheriff of Rockbridge County. Alexander and Campbell were area residents; Alexander served as the College's Treasurer from 1783 to 1796, resigning shortly after Graham resigned. Campbell remained on the board until 1807.²⁵ On November 8, 1776, the Virginia Gazette announced the opening of Liberty Hall on Timber Ridge in Augusta County to provide a liberal education for youth who wished knowledge necessary to enter "the study of Law, Physics, and Theology." The article continued to note: "The education and morals of youth being the great object in view, those peculiarities which form the complexion of any party shall have no place in the scheme." Tuition was £4 and board £9, and students were to provide their own beds, candles and laundry service.²⁶

During the war the academy supported the American effort. Graham's commitment to the Revolutionary cause led to his appointment in 1778 as captain in the militia. Considering the war as a fight for religious freedom, he justified his acceptance of the rank. His ardour certainly influenced the active participation by students at the academy in the revolt, particularly at the Battle of Guilford Court House.²⁷

As the Revolution continued, the Presbytery's ability to support the school lessened, compelling the rector to turn to agriculture to support his family. Purchasing a farm in 1779 near the new town of

Lexington (when Rockbridge County was formed from Augusta County in 1777, Lexington was laid out as the county seat, its name taken from the town in Massachusetts where the battle had occurred in 1776), Graham with the approval of the trustees moved the academy to his farm. At this time the academy possessed eighty acres of land, two houses, a library of 300 volumes, some equipment, all valued about \$2,000.00.²⁸

When the Revolution ended in 1781, the trustees requested a charter from the state legislature. Issued in 1782, the charter organized the trustees appointed by the Presbytery into a corporation under the name of "The Rector and Trustees of Liberty Hall Academy," with the right to confer degrees.²⁹ The academy had thus been elevated to a collegiate level and in September, 1785, twelve graduates received B.A. degrees.³⁰

The procuring of a charter was in the best interest of the academy, especially in financial matters. Although the charter released the church from official control of the institution, since the new nation upheld separation of church and state, the institution was still administered by Presbyterian ministers and laymen. Indeed, it generally retained its Presbyterian character until after the Civil War.³¹

During the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century, instruction was in the hands of Graham, who besides serving as Rector (President) was Professor of Moral Philosophy. His assistant was James Priestly, who studied and simultaneously served from 1782-84 as Professor of Languages and Mathematics. A native of

Rockbridge, Priestly left Liberty Hall to accept positions in Kentucky, Washington, D. C. and Maryland before being named President of Cumberland University in Nashville, Tennessee.³²

The required curriculum copied the classical program offered at Princeton: first year pupils devoted their time to Latin and Greek; second year students concentrated solely on mathematics; the third, geography, philosophy and natural philosophy; and fourth year scholars studied logic, natural law and philosophy. In 1819 modern languages were added.³³

Between 1776 and 1796, Graham served both the school and the community;³⁴ he was rector of the school and pastor of the local congregation who worshipped at the academy until 1797 when they built their own church structure.³⁵ During the revival of 1788 Graham was motivated to establish a theological department. This association of a theological division with the college is considered by some to be the first such association in the nation. Enrolling seven or eight young men each year, the department apparently was dissolved about 1796 when Graham resigned.³⁶ Sadie Bell (The Church, The State, and Education in Virginia) noted the operation of a theological department within or corollary to the institution for Presbyterian ministers reflected the religious/civil controversy over control of education in the post-Revolutionary era.³⁷

Unique among the church colleges founded during this period, Liberty Hall received a new charter in 1796 and a new board of trustees, "erecting Liberty Hall Academy into a college," an action

that the state legislature rescinded two years later.³⁸ Before Graham resigned in 1796 over political issues, he was instrumental in soliciting support of the institution from President George Washington, who donated 100 shares in the James River Canal Company to the college. Graham had been urged to petition the President for the gift by General Andrew Moore of Rockbridge, a trustee of the college, and General Francis Preston of Washington County, both members of Congress.³⁹ In consequence of the gift the state legislature wrote a new charter for the college, and without consulting the Presbyterian board of trustees, turned control over to a non-Presbyterian board headed by Bishop James Madison of the Episcopal Church. Reaction from Presbyterians was so vehement that the legislature rescinded its action in 1798 and returned control to the old board.⁴⁰ If the legislature had not rescinded its action, the group could easily have sought judicial appeal, a measure that suggests of the Dartmouth Case of 1818-1819. In appreciation of the gift or perhaps through political manipulations relative to the legislature's actions, the name of the institution was changed to Washington Academy. The name Washington Academy was changed to Washington College in 1813 and Rector to President; the action was merely nominal since degrees had been awarded since 1785.⁴¹

After the disassociation of Graham with the institution, the Presbyterian Synod began gradually to relinquish control over the college. In 1802 the academy burned, and the next year it moved to Lexington and its present location. When the state was considering a

site for the University of Virginia, Washington College was offered by the board as a possible nucleus. While not accepted the event serves as an indicator of Presbyterian interest in education. In 1870 the name was changed to Washington and Lee University in honor of both Washington and the distinguished Confederate general, Robert E. Lee, who served as President of the College after the war.⁴²

As to the Presbyterian involvement in a second institution, one needs to return to 1771, when the Hanover Presbytery was being urged by Samuel Stanhope Smith to support education. Through his efforts, settlers east of the Blue Ridge Mountains were stimulated to seek a school to complement the one in Augusta County. In the fall of 1774 a group of concerned citizens, organized by the Hanover Presbytery, began to solicit subscriptions for an academy. Meeting in Prince Edward County on February 1, 1775, at the home of Captain Nathaniel Venable, the concerned citizens reported subscriptions totalling £1300. A Prince Edward County resident, Mr. Peter Johnson, offered one hundred acres "at the Head of Hudson's Branch"⁴³ for the academy's site. Impressed by the success of the subscription campaign, the Presbytery authorized the construction of an academy hall, Principal's home and other homes, if financially possible. The first board of trustees was also appointed: four ministers and five lay members, plus the principal, ex officio.⁴⁴ A few months later four additional lay members and one minister were added. Included among the additional members were Patrick Henry and James Madison;⁴⁵ obviously their appointment would provide political benefit to the institution,

and one may assume this to have been a factor in their selection. Quite naturally the Presbytery selected Samuel Stanhope Smith, the institution's principal proponent, to be its first rector.⁴⁶ The Virginia Gazette advertised the point that a majority of the board were members of the Church of England,⁴⁷ a move that intended to secure the support of that denomination and its many influential members. This obviously was part of the reason for the appointment of Madison and Henry to the board.

The publication of the advertisement resulted in a letter to the editor signed by "Luther" and published in a later issue of the Gazette. The writer stated that he believed the appointment of Stanhope Smith to lead the institution to be improper. He noted that he thought "it inconsistent with prudence or good policy to suffer a dissenter to teach in any of our public schools, much less to act as President, both which are intended to take place in the Prince Edward Academy." He further stated "he [Smith] believes and professes doctrines which are not only repugnant to the doctrines of the Church of England, but, in my opinion, even subversive of morality."⁴⁸ This letter demonstrates the position of the Anglican Church in Virginia and explains why a majority of the board were Anglicans. Despite an Anglican majority on the board, the board itself was responsible to the Hanover Presbytery who retained ultimate control.

Named after two English patriots of the Civil War and Restoration Period, John Hampden and Algernon Sydney, the institution

was located about seven miles from Farmville.⁴⁹ Advertisements in the Virginia Gazette (October 7 and December 9, 1775) reported tuition to be £4 per year and other expenses not to exceed £10. Like the students at Liberty Hall, Hampden-Sydney youths were expected to furnish their beds and candles and do their own washing. Exercising authority over the academy, the Presbytery did advertise that religious toleration would be extended to all Christians, who could attend services in their own churches when and where possible. The advertisement continued:

The system of education will resemble that which is adopted in the College of New Jersey, save that a more particular attention shall be paid to the cultivation of the English language than is usually done in places of public education.⁵⁰

On January 1, 1776, Hampden-Sydney opened with a faculty consisting of the rector and two assistants, one of whom was John Blair Smith, brother of the rector. All three men were graduates of Princeton. Enrollments were larger than anticipated, passing the one hundred mark during the year; this rapid growth necessitated the employment of an additional assistant, David Witherspoon, also a Princeton alumni.⁵¹

Because the academy opened before its main building was completed, there was inadequate space for the larger than expected enrollment. To alleviate housing shortages, the students constructed huts with materials intended for the main building; these huts were reportedly "packed like a sugar loaf."⁵² Records indicate the

activities of the college's first year were limited to religion and academic study. Chapel services were conducted daily at 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., and attendance at a Christian service was mandatory on Sunday. Academic persistence might be concluded from study habits: eight to ten students sat on wooden planks and shared the light of a single candle to study until 9 or 10 o'clock at night.⁵³

A letter from one of the academy's first students provides an insight into some of the early problems: securing and keeping a housekeeper and cook, depreciation of the currency, and retention of students because of the demands for their services in the Virginia militia and continental army. The letter further noted two literary societies were organized in the summer of 1776, one called the Clisophic and the second, Tully Whitefield, later changed to The American Whig Society.⁵⁴ Involved in philosophy, history and politics, these two debating societies revealed the institutionally proper extra-curricular interest that young men should pursue.⁵⁵

During the Revolution, the students organized into a military company about sixty-five strong. The young men, dressed in hunting shirts dyed purple, drilled regularly. Their actual involvement occurred in 1777 when they marched to Williamsburg to participate in a battle to defend the capital, after which some entered the regular army. The academy continued to operate during the Revolution, apparently only suspending its operation when Cornwallis invaded Virginia in 1781. A large proportion of the students participated in the siege, and returned to the institution at its conclusion.⁵⁶

The academy experienced financial problems during the war years. The Board in April, 1777, decided to hold a lottery to raise funds. An advertisement in the Virginia Gazette presented the money making venture, but records do not indicate if indeed Hampden-Sydney benefitted from the attempt.⁵⁷ The unavailability of adequate funds apparently affected dining habits, as disputes about kinds of foods, quantities and their preparation were serious enough to be considered by the board. Limited records, however, prevent a complete examination of the problem.⁵⁸

In 1779 Samuel Stanhope Smith resigned the position of rector to accept the professorship of Moral Philosophy at his alma mater Princeton. Included in his resignation was a recommendation that the board appoint his brother, the Rev. John Blair Smith, to succeed him. The board complied by naming him President of the institution, combining the offices of rector, pastor and teacher. Within a few months the President was also appointed and accepted the pastorate of Cumberland and Briery churches, positions also held by his brother. This union of the academy president and community minister provided a bond that tied together the institution and surrounding community.⁵⁹

The next significant development in the elevation of the school to collegiate status occurred in 1783 when the Presbytery requested and obtained from the legislature a charter which officially recognized the Academy of Hampden-Sydney as the College of Hampden-Sydney empowering it to offer degrees. The charter was written by a trustee Patrick Henry; thus, one can see the religious and political

alliance enjoyed by the institution. One clause required that all teachers be supporters of American independence.⁶⁰ Just prior to the charter request, the Presbytery appointed seven additional trustees, noting that several of the trustees already on the board were too distantly located to be of service to the institution. Thus the church provided the base for its sectarian control through a self-perpetuating board totalling twenty-seven members, all but three being Presbyterians. An examination of the trustees reveals a group composed of Presbyterian ministers and prominent citizens whose influence and support certainly contributed to the college's continuance and growth.⁶¹

On September 22, 1786, eight students received A.B. degrees; and in April, 1787, the first M.A., an honorary degree, was conferred on a North Carolina Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Henry Patillo.⁶²

During and after the Revolution a general decline in religious zeal was noted by churchmen.⁶³ This moral deprivation was evident at Hampden-Sydney where pious students were the brunt of criticism, contempt and ridicule. In 1788 a group of four students who had been "revived" by itinerate Methodist and Baptist ministers began to meet secretly and share their religious zeal. Their meetings were uncovered by other students who publicized their clandestine meetings, which brought the issue to the attention of President Smith. Impressed by their spiritual fervor, President Smith invited the group to conduct their services in his home. Under his aegis a revival ensued that soon spread to Liberty Hall, and eventually to many neighboring

churches in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee. Among those who were stimulated by the revival was Archibald Alexander, a student at Liberty Hall who decided to enter the ministry and eventually rose to the presidency of Hampden-Sydney before founding and presiding over Princeton Theological Seminary.⁶⁴

John Blair Smith continued to lead the institution until 1789 when he resigned to devote full time to the ministry. The Presbytery offered the position to William Graham, then head of Liberty Academy, but he declined. One might speculate that Graham was offered the position through the influence of members of the Hampden-Sydney Board who were more sympathetic to Graham's active political life, as evidenced by his involvement in the war. The board then turned their attention to the Reverend Archibald Alexander, a graduate of Liberty Hall and a former theology student of Graham who was serving as a minister in the Lexington Presbytery. Creating a presidency with dual officers, the Presbytery appointed Archibald Alexander to share the authority with the Reverend Drury Lacy, President Smith's Vice-President; the two shared the office until 1796 when Alexander was singly named president, Lacy having assumed pastoral duties full-time.⁶⁵

Having won, vis a vis the Revolution, the privilege to charter and to establish their own colleges, the Presbyterians, who of all the college founding denominations except the Episcopalians, were best organized as a group and earliest to be committed to the need for higher education, led in denominational efforts to found colleges to

educate young men for the ministry and positions of leadership in the community.⁶⁶ Assuming a position of leadership in college founding among the Protestant groups, the Presbyterians founded two colleges over fifty years before any other denomination in the state.

Interestingly, between 1800 and 1861 the Presbyterians did not charter any other institutions, believing their denominational interests were adequately served by Hampden-Sydney and perhaps to a lesser degree, Washington College.

As the other Protestant groups became better organized, they joined the college founding movement. The next denomination to establish a college in Virginia were the Methodists. Although their first college did not appear until a half-century after the Presbyterians were operating two colleges, some Methodists had urged the establishment of a college as early as the Presbyterians.

Chapter II: Footnotes

¹Donald G. Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 90. This figure includes colleges duplicated or triplicated; the total number of permanent colleges less duplicates and triplicates is 182.

²Ibid.

³Ernest Trice Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, I, 1607-1861 (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 251.

⁴Tewksbury, Founding of American Colleges and Universities, p. 90; Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), pp. 3-23, 114-115; Elwyn Smith, The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture, A Study in Changing Concepts, 1700-1900 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1932), pp. 30-68.

⁵William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical, 2nd Edition (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1966), pp. 40-45.

⁶Foote, Sketches of Virginia, p. 45.

⁷Ibid., pp. 99-105.

⁸Wertenbaker, Princeton, pp. 44-45.

⁹Foote, Sketches of Virginia, pp. 107-140; Howard McKnight Wilson, The Lexington Presbytery Heritage (Verona, Virginia: McClure Press, 1971), pp. 30-43. In 1758 the two synods reconciled and united under the title, Synod of New York and Philadelphia. Wilson, Heritage, p. 43.

¹⁰Edwin S. Gaustad, editor, Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (New York: Arno Press, 1969), pp. 264-265.

¹¹Sadie Bell, The Church, The State and Education in Virginia (New York: Arno Press, 1969 (c. 1930)), pp. 241-243.

¹²Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1782, p. 25.

¹³Delemo L. Beard, "Origin and Early History of Presbyterianism in Virginia" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 1932), p. 458.

¹⁴See Appendix A.

¹⁵Vernon E. Kemp, editor, The Alumni Directory and Service Record of Washington and Lee University (Charlottesville, Virginia: The Michie Company, 1926), p. 7.

¹⁶Hugh Blair Grigsby, Washington and Lee Historical Papers, II (Baltimore: John Murphy and Company, 1890), p. 9.

¹⁷Henry Richard Mahler, Jr., "The Contribution of Liberty Hall and Washington College to Presbyterianism in Virginia, 1749-1870" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, 1952), pp. 1-2.

¹⁸Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 454; Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College During the Eighteenth Century (New York: Auson D. F. Randolph and Company, 1872), p. 5. Brown was enrolled, December 3, 1755, as a charter member of the Hanover Presbytery. Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, 1755, p. 1.

¹⁹Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, October 9, 1771, p. 37. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, p. 393; Alexander, Princeton College, pp. 130-133.

²⁰Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, October 13, 1774, p. 55; May 6, 1776, p. 78-79. Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 455-456, 460-461; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, pp. 393, 446-447; Alexander, Princeton College, pp. 163-164, 189.

²¹Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, May 6, 1776, pp. 79-80.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 457.

²³Mahler, "Liberty Hall and Washington College," p. 7.

²⁴Robert Goggin Gillespie, Jr., "Reverend William Graham, Presbyterian Minister and Rector of Liberty Hall Academy" (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Richmond, Virginia, 1970), p. 28.

²⁵Kemp, Alumni Directory, pp. 27-30, 41-43.

- ²⁶The Virginia Gazette, November 8, 1776.
- ²⁷ Foote, Sketches of Virginia, pp. 450-455.
- ²⁸ Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 458.
- ²⁹ Acts of the Assembly, 1782, p. 25.
- ³⁰ Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 458.
- ³¹ Mahler, "Liberty Hall and Washington College," p. 7.
- ³² Kemp, Alumni Directory, p. 31.
- ³³ Wertenbaker, Princeton, pp. 90-93; Ernest Trice Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, p. 254.
- ³⁴ In 1786 the Hanover Presbytery was divided into two parts: those churches east of the Blue Ridge constituted the Hanover Presbytery; those west, the Lexington. The presiding minister of the Lexington Presbytery was John Brown, also influential in Washington College. Howard McKnight Wilson, The Lexington Presbytery Heritage (Verona, Virginia: McClure Press, 1971), p. 66. Whether this contributed to rivalry between Washington College and Hampden-Sydney is difficult to assess, but it seems possible.
- ³⁵ Wilson, The Lexington Heritage, p. 348.
- ³⁶ Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, p. 253.
- ³⁷ Bell, The Church, The State and Education in Virginia, pp. 42-43.
- ³⁸ Acts of the Assembly, 1796, p. 27.
- ³⁹ Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," pp. 459-461.
- ⁴⁰ Acts of the Assembly, 1796, pp. 26-27; Acts of the Assembly, 1798, p. 26.
- ⁴¹ Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, p. 254; Acts of the Assembly, 1813, p. 90.
- ⁴² Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 460; Wilson, The Lexington Heritage, p. 83.
- ⁴³ Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, February 2, 1775, p. 137.

⁴⁴Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, October 14, 1774, pp. 57-58; November 8, 1775, pp. 70-71.

⁴⁵Both Henry and Madison were educated men who supported religious freedom. In addition, Madison was a graduate of Princeton. William C. Rives, Life and Times of James Madison, I (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1866), p. 25; Alexander, Princeton College, pp. 143-145.

⁴⁶Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," pp. 463-464.

⁴⁷The Virginia Gazette, September 1, 1775.

⁴⁸Alfred J. Morrison, The College of Hampden-Sydney: Calendar of Board Minutes, 1776-1876 (Richmond, Virginia: The Hermitage Press, 1912), pp. 15-16.

⁴⁹Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 462.

⁵⁰The Virginia Gazette, September 1, 1775.

⁵¹Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 465; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, p. 400; Alexander, Princeton College, pp. 170-171, 181.

⁵²Foote, Sketches of Virginia, p. 400.

⁵³Ibid., Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, p. 256.

⁵⁴Letter from George Craghead to Mr. Watkins in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, pp. 401-402. The names for the societies were obviously taken from the literary societies bearing the same names established at Princeton in the 1750's. Wertenbaker, Princeton, pp. 201, 206.

⁵⁵Foote, Sketches of Virginia, pp. 401-402.

⁵⁶Morrison, Board Minutes, p. 25; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, pp. 400, 412; Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 466.

⁵⁷Morrison, Board Minutes, April 11, 1777, pp. 22-23; The Virginia Gazette, July 25, 1777.

⁵⁸Morrison, Board Minutes, December 18, 1776, pp. 22, 25.

⁵⁹Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, October 28, 1779, pp. 104-105; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, p. 399; Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 466.

⁶⁰Acts of the Assembly, 1783, pp. 36-37. Although Patrick Henry was the son of an Anglican, his mother was Presbyterian; and he often accompanied her to hear Samuel Davies when he was in Virginia. Wilson, The Lexington Heritage, p. 52; Morrison, Board Minutes, March 6, 1783, p. 26.

⁶¹Minutes, Hanover Presbytery, October 22, 1782, p. 158; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, p. 404; H. C. Bagby, editor, General Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Hampden-Sydney College Virginia 1776-1906 (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, Printers, 1908), pp. 13-15.

⁶²Morrison, Board Minutes, September 22, 1786, p. 34; June 28, 1787, p. 34; Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 466.

⁶³Benjamin Rice Lacy, Jr., Revivals in the Midst of the Years (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1943), pp. 64-65.

⁶⁴Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, p. 253; Wilson, The Lexington Heritage, pp. 73-79, 85; Wertenbaker, Princeton, pp. 147, 239.

⁶⁵Foote, Sketches of Virginia, pp. 406-407.

⁶⁶Beard, "Presbyterianism in Virginia," p. 467, Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, pp. 253, 256-257.

CHAPTER III

THE METHODISTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

At the time of the Revolution, Methodists were no more than societies within the fold of the Anglican Church. As a result of the Anglican Church's disestablishment, however, American Methodists formalized their societies into a separate and distinct denomination.

Having enjoyed considerable growth in Virginia prior to the Revolution, the Methodists, while a post-war denomination, were partially organized before the official formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore in 1784. Indeed, by 1777 there were 4,379 members of the societies in Virginia and adjoining counties in North Carolina, while total membership in the colonies was only 6,968. When the Methodists formally organized in 1784 they numbered about 15,000, a number that swelled to 57,631 by 1790. By 1820 the denomination claimed the distinction of being the largest in America. In addition to being the largest denomination in nineteenth century America, the Methodists also founded the second largest number of permanent colleges in America prior to the Civil War. Having founded thirty-four permanent institutions by 1860, they were only exceeded by the Presbyterians who could claim forty-nine.¹

While not the first denomination to found a college in America following the Revolution, the Methodists enjoyed the distinction of

having founded their first permanent college in Virginia; and within a few years, they established a second Virginia based institution of higher education.² Chartered in 1830,³ Randolph-Macon College was the Methodist's first successful attempt to found a college committed to the tenets of their denomination.

Like their Baptist brethren many Virginia Methodists who resided in the western portion of the state beyond the falls of the rivers were poorly educated and in some cases actually opposed to advanced education. Peter Cartwright, backwoods circuit rider in Kentucky in 1804, rejected colleges and seminary education for ministers, asserting it would create a "settled ministry, like the Presbyterians. . . ."⁴ Cartwright further observed that he was "unacquainted with the proselyting tricks of those that hold to exclusive immersion as the mode and only mode, of baptism,"⁵ an obvious direct reference to the Baptists. He compared many educated preachers to lettuce growing in the shade of a peach tree and argued that "the illiterate Methodist preachers actually set the world on fire, while they (Presbyterians) were lighting their matches!"⁶

Despite this opposition to education, an academy was founded about 1785 under the leadership of Bishop Asbury, American Methodist's first superintendent. Located in Brunswick County about halfway between Petersburg and Boydton, the academy was operated by trustees appointed by the Bishop or the Annual Conference. Eventually, however, control of the academy passed to county authorities who operated it for many years.⁷

While no direct connection has been established between this enterprise and the college founded in 1830 at Boynton, it does serve to indicate some Methodists were concerned with education.

Although Virginia denominational colleges by 1800 numbered three, they were generally considered undesirable by many Methodists. William and Mary, located in Williamsburg, was under the control of Episcopalians who permitted excessive worldliness and free-living.⁸ Also Episcopalians tended to look down on Methodists as socially inferior. Hampden-Sydney, while legally non-sectarian, was under the control of the Presbyterians; and at that time devout Methodists feared their sons might become indoctrinated in unacceptable Calvinistic doctrines. The other institution, Washington College, while less controlled by the Presbyterian Synod, was too far west, and outside the Virginia Conference.⁹

In 1820 Virginia supporters of education were aided by a decision rendered by the General Conference: the General Conference passed legislation that permitted bishops to appoint traveling preachers as teachers and officers in schools and colleges. In 1824 additional legislation recommended all annual conferences to establish literary institutions under their supervision.¹⁰

Albea Godbold in The Church College in the Old South stated the primary reason colleges were founded was to train ministers.¹¹ Writing about the Rev. Hezekiah G. Leigh, D. D., one of the founders of Randolph-Macon, the Rev. W. H. Moore, D. D., stated: "He saw that an institution of college grade was necessary in which at least a good

proportion of young men called of God to preach might receive a more liberal education."¹² He further noted: "Dr. Leigh saw the disastrous effects of educating our young people in colleges of other denominations, . . ." and believed attendance at other denominational colleges tended to bias and alienate young men from Methodism.¹³

As to the actual planning of the college, two men were primarily responsible, Hezekiah B. Leigh, a distinguished minister in the Virginia Conference; and Gabriel P. Disosway, a prosperous Petersburg businessman and Methodist layman. Dr. Leigh was born in Perquimans County, North Carolina, in 1795. He attended an academy near Edenton for two years, then taught for seven years thereafter. In 1818 he entered the ministry "on trial," and in 1830 married Mary Jane Crump, a daughter of Major Richard Crump of Northampton County. He purchased an estate near Boydton to support his family and preached until his death in 1853. Having been a teacher, he valued highly education and was an ardent supporter of an educated ministry.¹⁴

Mr. Disosway, a native of New York City, was born in 1799 and received an A.B. degree from Columbia College, New York, in 1821. Moving to Petersburg where he married a Virginia lady, Disosway became a leader among area Methodists, and a proponent of a college for Virginia Methodists. In 1828 he returned to New York, apparently for economic reasons, thus ending his involvement with the collegiate scheme and leaving the college's actual founding to Leigh and others.¹⁵

The minutes of the Virginia Conference, meeting in Oxford, North Carolina, on February 24, 1825, reveal that Virginia Methodists acted early on the General Conference's legislation of the prior year. A motion was made to refer the subject to a committee of twelve to consist of six members of the Conference, the remaining six from local preachers or laymen of the church. The original membership included John Early, Hezekiah G. Leigh, Cobb Leach, Charles Cooley, William Compton, and George Anderson, Conference clergymen; Gabriel P. Disosway, Joseph Littlejohn, John Nuthall, Lewis Taylor, Joseph Taylor and Jesse H. Cobb, laity.¹⁶

By this time Leigh and Disosway had gained the support of John Early who seems to have assumed leadership of the endeavor, a position he maintained for many years. When the first meeting of the board of trustees was held, Early was elected president of the board, an office he held for about forty years.¹⁷

At the meeting of the Virginia Conference held in February, 1826, in Portsmouth, a report was made on the establishment of a "Seminary of Learning" and then tabled.¹⁸ The content of the report was not stated, but on February 22, the committee of twelve--which had recently been enlarged to include five more ministers or preachers and two additional laymen--presented their report which was discussed, amended and adopted. The Conference further approved appointment of a "Select Committee" composed of Hezekiah Leigh, John Early, George Charlton, James Smith, Thomas Crowder, Ethelbert Drake,

ministers; and Gabriel Disosway, Robert Armistead, William Clarke, and John C. Pegram, laymen. This committee was charged with drafting a constitution for the proposed college.¹⁹

Meeting in Petersburg in February, 1827, the Conference adopted the constitution drafted by the Committee and resolved that every member of the Virginia Conference solicit subscriptions for the college "to be founded within the bounds of this Conference."²⁰

At the Conference in 1828 held in Raleigh, North Carolina, a Committee of Seven was appointed to execute the directives of the Conference. This committee included Hezekiah Leigh, Lewis Skidmore, Daniel Hall, William Waller, Moses Brock, John Early and William Smith;²¹ Disosway apparently had moved to New York by this time, and his association with the college seems to have terminated.

The committee was charged with three responsibilities:

(1) "to see that all the presiding elders, and through them, the preachers of the circuits and stations pay a due and diligent attention to every regulation and matter pertaining to the interest and establishment of the college contemplated";²² (2) to employ an agent to obtain subscriptions and donations for the project; and (3) to examine advantages of each site proposed as a suitable location for the college and to report the findings at the next annual meeting of the Virginia Conference.²³

The 1829 Conference was held in February in Lynchburg. The proposals of the committee selected the previous year were accepted as presented, but its contents were not included in the report. Later

in the meeting Hezekiah Leigh was elected college agent to "travel through the bounds of the Virginia Annual Conference and use due diligence to (obtain) subscriptions."²⁴ At that time twelve trustees for the contemplated college were selected by ballot: John Early, William A. Smith, Henry Holms, Lewis Skidmore, Thomas Crowder, Hezekiah Leigh, William Waller, Moses Brock, James Boyd, Mathew M. Dauce, Edward Cannon and William Hammett. These twelve Conference ministers were to be joined by eighteen other trustees selected among area preachers and laymen. All except four of the thirty trustees were Methodists, and three of the four were prominent Mecklenburg citizens.²⁵

Through the influence of Leigh, Mecklenburg County was selected as the most suitable area for the college. Located in the southern part of the Conference--and state--the college could serve both Virginia and North Carolina, since northern counties in North Carolina were members of the Virginia Conference until 1840 when the North Carolina Conference was formed. Indeed several board members were from that state; and early in the college's operation, trustees were also elected from South Carolina and Georgia in hopes of attracting additional support.²⁶

Selection of a name for the institution seems to have been at least partially predicated on the desire to disparage any accusation of the college being a denominational seminary. Consistent with precedent (e.g., William and Mary, Washington College, Hampden-Sydney),

the name selected was from individuals who were primarily political figures. While neither John Randolph of Virginia nor Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina was Methodist, they seemed to represent liberty and freedom because of their political views.²⁷

When the Methodists submitted the proposed charter to the Virginia legislature for their approval, considerable debate ensued relative to the issue of denominational control. To insure that the institution would not be a seminary, a rider was attached to the bill prohibiting the establishment of a theological professorship.²⁸

Examination of the Conference Minutes for 1830 indicates that the members were concerned that Methodists should continually maintain control of the board of trustees; some legislators may have known of this concern and have been reluctant to charter the institution until assured denominational control would not create exclusiveness, a fear partially allayed when patrons noted the proposed board included non-Methodists--even if they were but four.²⁹

Chartered on February 3, 1830,³⁰ the college was little more than a dream, since not even land had been secured on which to locate the institution. But the college was destined to a more noble fate than the ignominy suffered by many colleges that never surfeited beyond the penmanship of a charter.

The first meeting of the board of trustees after the issuance of the charter was held at Boydtown [sic], April 9, 1830. Members of the Virginia Conference held a comfortable majority on the board, electing the Rev. John Early, Board President, and William A. Smith, Secretary.³¹

While not a college graduate, Early was an ardent supporter of the college movement and distinguished church leader who rose to become Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Smith, also an ardent proponent of an educated ministry, eventually rose to the position of president in 1847, an office he held until the end of the Civil War (1865).³²

Several committees were established including one to secure land for the location of the college and one to draft rules for the governance of the board. The Rev. Hezekiah Leigh reported from the Building Committee that three bids had been received for college building, one for \$30,182, one for \$20,569 and third for \$19,238. As agent for the enterprise, Leigh reported a subscription from Mecklenburg County for \$10,000 and other subscriptions in the amount of \$9,135.90, but only \$399.79 had actually been collected.³³

The board resolved that a preparatory school be established at the college as soon as a building could be readied, and \$1,500 was appropriated toward its construction. At its second meeting on October 30, 1830, the board approved a bid of \$14,137 to construct a four-storied brick building fifty-two feet wide by fifty-four feet deep, with two wings sixty-seven and a half feet each on 250 acres of land purchased by the site committee. Occupancy was to be spring, 1832. Leigh reported collection of \$941.59; subscriptions, \$27,762.70. The largest subscription was \$1,000, made by Colonel William Townes, a non-Methodist resident of Mecklenburg County who contributed to the

college's support for several years. No other subscription on the list of almost five hundred names exceeded \$300.00.³⁴

On April 15, 1831, the board held its third meeting and elected the Rev. Thomas Adams, a minister in Lunenburg County, to replace the Rev. James Smith, who had resigned. A "Steward's Hall," not to exceed \$4,000.00, was authorized; and faculty salaries were set at \$1,000 for the president and \$800 for professors per annum. The board voted to meet in October to select faculty members.³⁵

The fourth board meeting convened on October 15, John Early presiding. Mr. Leigh reported subscriptions of \$9,873. The Rev. William Hammett who had been selected as an agent at the board's second meeting the preceding year, reported subscriptions of \$13,047, a total of \$22,920. To enlist the support of South Carolina Methodists, the board recommended that if the South Carolina Conference would "unite and co-operate with the Board in the support of Randolph-Macon College,"³⁶ it would elect six trustees from that Conference. A similar offer was submitted to the Georgia Conference.³⁷

In other business faculty members were elected by the board: "Rev. John Emory, D. D.,³⁸ of New York, President and Professor of Moral Science; Rev. Martin P. Parks,³⁹ of North Carolina, Professor of Mathematics; Landon C. Garland,⁴⁰ of Virginia, Professor of Natural Science; Rev. Robert Emory,⁴¹ of New York, Professor of Language."⁴² Garland and Parks accepted their appointments; both John Emory and

Robert Emory declined, noting reluctance to leave ministerial positions as their primary reason.⁴³

A report concerning the Preparatory School indicated it opened in 1832 with thirty-eight students. The first principal was Rev. Lorenzo Lea, A. M., who was delayed in assuming his duties because of responsibilities at the University of North Carolina. During the interim, Hugh Garland, brother of Landon Garland, and a graduate of Hampden-Sydney, superintended operations.⁴⁴

At the board's sixth meeting held July 4, 1832, a letter was received from the South Carolina Conference endorsing the project and pledging their support. Six trustees, nominated by the South Carolina Conference were elected. Similar offers were made to the Baltimore Conference⁴⁵ and the Holston Conference, the association serving western Virginia counties.⁴⁶

To fill the positions declined by John and Robert Emory, the board selected the Rev. Stephen Olin, a professor at Franklin College, Georgia, as President and Professor Edward D. Sims, A. M., of LaGrange College, Alabama, Professor of Languages.⁴⁷ Both men accepted. Olin, a native of Vermont, graduated from Middleburg College, Vermont. Because of poor health he accepted a position at Cokesburg Academy in South Carolina, a preparatory school operated by Methodists of that state. He subsequently became a minister and joined the South Carolina Conference, but ill-health necessitated his accepting a less demanding position than church minister, and he accepted a Professorship at Franklin College, Athens, Georgia. He remained there

until his appointment to the presidency of Randolph-Macon. In 1836 he accepted the presidency of Wesleyan College, Connecticut, a position he held until his death in 1851 at fifty-four.⁴⁸

The Rev. Martin Parks, a graduate of West Point Military Academy and a member of the Virginia Conference, served as acting President of the College from its opening in October, 1832 until Dr. Olin's arrival, March, 1834. Mr. Parks eventually resigned his position, left the Methodist denomination and joined the Episcopalians. The reason given was his "suspicious, cold and envious" nature.⁴⁹

When the college opened in October, 1832, the campus occupied only about four acres and was dominated by the college's only building. Soon after this an avenue was built to Boydton, itself only a small village. The closest town was Clarksville, about twelve miles away. Soon thereafter other buildings appeared, including the "Steward's Hall," to board students; the President's House; and "The Hotel," to accommodate the preparatory students who attended a two room structure about a mile from campus, and visitors.⁵⁰

That Randolph-Macon was a Methodist enterprise cannot be disputed. Like their fellow Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Methodists believed Randolph-Macon would instill in youth those values they most avidly professed. Indeed Landon Garland's decision to leave Washington College was motivated by denominational zeal. A staunch Methodist, he accepted less pay from Randolph-Macon to serve his denomination.⁵¹

Dr. Olin, in planning his trip to Virginia in 1833, wrote Bishop J. O. Andrew: "I was never so convinced that we must educate our own youth in our own schools, . . ."⁵² In his inaugural address delivered March 5, 1834, Olin noted that America's four million Methodists "call upon us for the means of education. . . . She owes it to her character--to her interest--to self-preservation."⁵³

As Dr. Olin spoke these words Methodists in western Virginia were planning the establishment of a second Methodist college in Virginia to provide higher educational opportunities closer to home.

The Presbyterians had organized in western Virginia as early as 1772; they were soon after joined by Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans and German Reformed. The Methodists' first organized assembly probably dates from 1783 when Jeremiah Lambert became a circuit rider or traveling preacher in the Holston Circuit, an area within the Western Conference. The Western Conference at that time "included all territory west of the Appalachian watershed."⁵⁴ In 1812 the Western Conference was divided into two parts, the Tennessee Conference, comprising primarily that land south of the Ohio River, and the Ohio Conference to the north. In November, 1824, Methodists mainly in Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee separated from the Tennessee Conference to form the Holston Conference. The Conference actually included counties in Tennessee east of the Cumberland Mountains, some of the northern counties in Georgia, western counties in North Carolina, and those in Virginia south of the Roanoke River. The name

Holston was derived from the river of that name which traversed much of the region.⁵⁵

When the Holston Conference was organized in 1824 Methodist laymen numbered 14,934 and forty-one traveling preachers. In twenty years the number of laymen had increased to 39,479⁵⁶ while preachers numbered only about ninety.

A leader in the organization of the Conference was Thomas Stringfield, a young man of only twenty-seven at the time. The preceding year Stringfield had been honored by being named presiding elder of the Knoxville District, one of the three districts in the conference at its formation. Being self-taught, Stringfield was keenly interested in improving educational opportunities for Methodist youth, especially those who wished to become itinerant ministers, a vocation expedient to the cause of evangelism.

The reaction to Deism and presence of varied denominational groups created rivalry. In the rural areas Methodists and Baptists vied for members; in the more settled areas, such as Knoxville and Abingdon, Presbyterians and Methodists competed. As Methodists began to outdistance the others, the rivalry intensified. Presbyterians asserted the Methodist ministers were uneducated, thus implying they were religiously ignorant; the Methodists retorted that the Presbyterians were like the learned Pharisees who had no heart-felt religious conviction. Certainly one factor that was detrimental to the Presbyterians was the schism between New Light and Old Light believers that resulted in a scarcity of ministers in the area.

Methodists, on the other hand, were at least served, even though their circuit riders had limited formal education.⁵⁷

It is little wonder that while Presbyterian colleges existed in the area before the founding of Emory and Henry, they were generally considered out of bounds to Methodists who looked with suspicion on these havens of Presbyterianism. A verbal exchange between the Rev. Robert Hardin, a Presbyterian agent for Southern and Western Theological Seminary in Knoxville, Tennessee, and the Rev. Thomas Stringfield, one of the founders of the Holston Conference, confirms this rivalry. Hardin had appealed for funds for the Seminary, and Stringfield opposed the solicitation on the grounds the institution was too exclusively Presbyterian.⁵⁸

At the Conference's second session held at Jonesboro, Tennessee, October, 1825, Stringfield, Jesse Cunningham, John Heninger, George Horn and David Adams were named to a committee "to examine into the propriety of establishing a school under the patronage of the Holston Conference."⁵⁹ At its fifth annual meeting held in November, 1828, in Jonesboro, Abingdon was selected as the site for a seminary; the Rev. Thomas Catlett was instructed to raise funds.⁶⁰ When the sixth session convened in Abingdon in December, 1829, Thomas Stringfield and John Heninger were appointed agents for the seminary. The following year the school was named Holston Seminary and located at New Market, Tennessee; in 1832 the first students enrolled.⁶¹

In 1834 the Rev. Creed Fulton, a Virginia born, self-educated preacher became the seminary's agent;⁶² he immediately engaged in an

extensive fund raising campaign through southern Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. Upon returning to Southwest Virginia, he reported that the Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists were already actively engaged in soliciting support in the East, and that if the Methodists in the Holston Conference wanted to advance their educational aims, they must seriously consider expanding their operation into a manual labor school.⁶³

When the Holston Conference met in Abingdon in October, 1835, the seventy ministers were representing 23,882 members, generally committed that the Conference needed to support a more ambitious educational program. The Committee included, besides Fulton, Dr. Joseph B. M. Rees, Rev. Thomas Stringfield, Rev. Thomas Catlett, Judge Jacob Peck, General John Cocke, and Mr. William Patton. They were directed:

to examine the relative advantages of New Market and other places as to land subscriptions etc. for an extensive manual labor school after which at least 4 of the Committee besides himself shall personally examine the several places[;] then the Committee shall meet and permanently locate the site.⁶⁴

Some favored broadening the scope of the Seminary at New Market; others favored establishing a new institution elsewhere. After considerable discussion the Rev. Creed Fulton was appointed chairman of a committee of seven to select a location, solicit funds, draft a constitution and report at the next meeting of the Conference. The ministers generally agreed the new institution should be a manual labor school, one where students combined academic endeavor with

physical labor. This feature was especially popular among many of the rural planters who believed education should be practical.⁶⁵

Fulton, who had been appointed agent for Holston Seminary in 1834, had borrowed a horse from Tobias Smyth, a Methodist layman who operated a small farm and tanning-yard near the present site of Emory. When Fulton returned the horse, he informed Smyth of the Conference's decision to found a manual labor school of collegiate grade. Smyth, while lacking much education, was in favor of the idea and informed Fulton of a nearby farm of 555 acres belonging to the heirs of Edward Crawford, a deceased Presbyterian minister. On December 31, 1835, Fulton convened the Committee in Abingdon, Virginia, to inform them of the availability of the Crawford estate about nine miles east of the town. The next day, January 1, 1836, the Committee examined the tract and unanimously authorized purchase. In April the sale of the land was negotiated for \$4,500.00, a sum raised through subscriptions solicited by Fulton, other Conference ministers and area laymen.⁶⁶ While Fulton was undoubtedly the leader of the movement, he was ably assisted by men like Colonel William Byars of Brook Hall, Washington County, Alexander Findlay of Abingdon and Tobias Smyth of Washington County, laymen who personally and financially helped Fulton realize his dream.⁶⁷

The Committee's report, submitted to the Holston Conference in 1836 by Chairman Fulton indicated the choice of location was predicated on the total subscriptions received, the section contributing the highest amount being the site of the institution. Solicita-

tion of funds in southern Virginia had begun as soon as Fulton returned his borrowed horse to Tobias Smyth. Smyth immediately pledged \$500.00 and encouraged Fulton to address a group of people who would assemble on November 11, for an estate sale of Mr. John Smith, recently deceased. The decision to make an appeal on this occasion was productive, and during the subsequent six weeks 723 persons subscribed \$42,428.78. Of this amount \$25,923.52 was collected, and \$12,701.03--or nearly one-half--was collected in Washington County where the college was located. East Tennessee, on the other hand, contributed little more than \$600.00. Thus, if indeed money talks, the Committee had some obligation to consider seriously the location selected by Fulton when they met on December 31, 1835.⁶⁸

The Committee wasted no time in advancing the cause of the Manual Labor School. Committees were appointed to rent or cultivate the land until the college should begin operation, construct a building near Crawford's dwelling in which to open the school by February, 1837, and to inform ministers and laymen of the project. Findley was elected Treasurer of the Institution and Patton, Secretary.⁶⁹

Between this action and the meeting of the Conference in October, 1836, the trustees of Holston Seminary issued a report condemning the action of the Committee, the Conference and most especially Rev. Creed Fulton. Indeed, they intimated that Fulton was surreptitious and clandestine in his actions as agent for Holston Seminary in handling subscriptions to that institution and in selecting a new site for the manual labor school rather than extending

the scope of the institution only recently established at New Market. They even suggested that he (Fulton) may have been "seduced" into commencing a new institution near Abingdon by the delusion of "becoming a founder of an institution of learning."⁷⁰

That some rivalry was existent between Methodists in Southwest Virginia and Eastern Tennessee seems evident. The trustees of Holston Seminary alluded to this when they noted; "East Tennessee has prospects opening to her";⁷¹ interestingly, Judge Peck, who was absent when the Committee convened to examine the Crawford tract, was Secretary of the Board of Trustees for Holston Seminary and probably the principal author of the report condemning Fulton.⁷²

When the Conference met at Reem's Creek, North Carolina, October, 1836, the cornerstone for the main building had already been laid. The Fulton forces seemed to have had control of the members who adopted the Committee's report and actions as presented.

The report, which has been previously noted, urged Conference members to support ardently the new enterprise:

we may indulge the hope that a generous public will soon meet the wants of our College, so that we may be able to contribute something to the improvement and renovation of a sinful and benighted world.⁷³

Noting that a moral education was the cornerstone of civilization, Fulton eulogized the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and Babylonians; at the same time he condemned "Popery and Mohammedanism, the most deadly scourges that ever befell the human race," as having emerged from the barbarism of the Middle Ages.⁷⁴

Fulton was named agent for the institution; and after discussion the Conference selected the name, Emory and Henry College. Emory was in honor of the distinguished Methodist bishop, John Emory; Henry, in honor of the defender of patriotism and freedom, Patrick Henry, whose sister Elizabeth Henry (m. William Campbell) had been a pillar among Methodists in Southwest Virginia.⁷⁵

The next year, 1837, the Conference met in Madisonville, Tennessee, and unanimously adopted a constitution for the new institution. Drafted by a committee of nine which was chaired by William Patton and included Creed Fulton, the document included thirty-three articles. Some of the more important provisions included:

Article I. There shall be erected and established in the County of Washington and State of Virginia, a Manual Labor College, for the instruction of youth in the various branches of Science and Literature, the useful Arts, Agriculture and the Ancient and Modern Languages.

ART. 3. There shall be a Board of Trustees, to consist of thirteen; a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, who shall . . . make and establish from time to time such By Laws, Rules and Regulations, not contrary to this Constitution, as shall by them be thought essential to the good order and government of the professors, masters and students of said college.

ART. 4. The first Board of Trustees for said college shall be appointed by the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at its next annual meeting.

ART. 14. The Holston Conference shall have power and authority annually to appoint any number of visitors not exceeding thirteen, who or so many of them as shall convene with the Board of Trustees, shall constitute a Joint Board, which shall elect the President and Faculty for Emory and Henry College. They shall also provide for the appointment of such teachers as may be necessary. And the said Joint Board shall have power, for good cause, to suspend or remove the President or any of the Professors of said College, and to supply all vacancies thus occasioned. And when a vacancy shall from any cause occur in the Board of Trustees, the said Joint Board shall, at its next annual meeting thereafter, supply such vacancy, provided, that at no time shall more than one half of the Board of Trustees by any appointment be made to consist of any one religious denomination.

ART. 23. The plan of Emory and Henry College shall be a regular and uniform alternation of study and manual labor. No student shall be exempt from this law.

ART. 26. As to Morals and Religion--The purest morality ought to be instilled into the minds of scholars, so that on their entrance into active life they may, from inclination and habit, evince benevolence towards their fellow creatures and love of truth and sobriety and industry. Therefore, every teacher in the college employed for the instruction of whatever branches, shall also promote, as far as depends upon him, the moral and religious education of the scholars.

ART. 30. No person shall be ineligible to any office or trust as pertaining to the college, or to be secluded from a full and free participation in the privileges and benefits of the college because of his religious tenets.⁷⁶

The Conference named as members of the college's first Board of Trustees John W. Price, William Byars, Alexander Findlay, John W. C. Watson, Creed Fulton, Tobias Smyth, Daniel Trigg, Nicherson Snead, Thomas K. Catlett, John N. Humes, Nathaniel E. Sherman, Arnold Patton and Thomas L. Preston. Of the original thirteen trustees only four--Fulton, Catlett, Patton and Sherman--were Methodist ministers. The

remaining laymen, all from Southwest Virginia, were farmers and professionals, and each took an active role in the operation of the infant college.⁷⁷

The College's physical facilities were completed as quickly as feasible. When the farm was acquired, the Crawford residence became an integral part of the college. The barn and other dependencies were repaired, since the institution was to be manual labor. Two additional structures were erected: a board house or steward's hall, designed by Col. William Byars, and the college, the principal building designed by Alexander Findlay to accommodate classrooms, dormitory facilities for one-hundred and fifty students, apartments for faculty and a chapel-study hall. Four stories high, the building was constructed of brick and measured one hundred fifty feet by forty-five feet; the facade was plain, lacking any architectural adornments such as a portico, and the roof was wooden, creating a fire hazard until replaced by metal some years later.⁷⁸

To secure faculty suitable to Methodism, Fulton wrote President Fisk at Wesleyan College, Middletown, Connecticut. Wesleyan, founded in 1831, and Randolph-Macon were the only well-established Methodist institutions to which Fulton and the Board could turn to find college-educated men knowledgeable in their denominational tenets.⁷⁹ The first selection was Charles Collins,⁸⁰ a native of Maine and an 1837 graduate of Wesleyan. Collins, who was serving as principal of Augusta High School in Maine at the time of his appointment, invited Aphraim Emerson Wiley⁸¹ in 1838 and William T. Harlow⁸² in 1840, two

other Wesleyan classmates, to join him. All three men joined the Holston Conference, confirming any opinion as to the influence of the Methodist Church on the faculty.

When the first session began on April 13, 1838, there were sixty students from Washington County or neighboring rural counties in Virginia and Tennessee enrolled, all in the preparatory department. By the fall session the number had increased to one hundred. Not until Fall, 1840, were any collegiate courses offered, and by that time the institution had received its charter. The course of study at the college, modeled after that at Wesleyan, was divided into six departments: moral science⁸³ and belles lettres, mathematics and natural philosophy, natural science, ancient languages, modern languages, and agricultural chemistry and scientific farming. The last course of study was designed as appropriate to the manual labor program, which, like the course in agricultural chemistry and scientific farming, proved to be a failure as classes began to interfere with work and as students sought ways to eschew hard labor.⁸⁴

Fees were kept low to permit rural youth of even less than modest means the opportunity to attend. The manual labor program was expected to pay for boarding and meals; however, this was never realized. While subscriptions were often generous for individuals of little wealth, frequently they were not paid, and gifts were infrequent. Thus the college was heavily in debt when Collins assumed the presidency, and necessitated the board petitioning the state for a Literary Fund loan in 1843.⁸⁵

The decision to secure a charter for the college may have been influenced by the financial panic of 1837 which limited availability of funds among rural supporters of the college. In any case, certain legal advantages were inherent in having a charter from the state and on March 25, 1839, the state legislature approved the incorporation of Emory and Henry College. Like other state institutions it could not establish a theological division nor deny individuals the privilege to associate as students or faculty because of their religious tenets.⁸⁶

Thus was founded Virginia Methodism's second permanent college to provide morally sound educational opportunities for young men in the Holston Conference. Preparing ministers, business leaders and others committed or at least partial to the principals of Methodism was now the responsibility of Methodists.

As a result of the founding of Randolph-Macon and Emory and Henry, Virginia Methodists were able to compete with the Episcopalians and Presbyterians; young men reared in Methodist homes now could obtain collegiate educations in environments compatible with Methodist beliefs.

Other Protestant groups in Virginia were also motivated to found their own institutions, and an era of zealous denominational college founding ensued, the Disciples of Christ being the next sect to charter a collegiate institution.

Chapter III: Footnotes

¹Winthrop Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. 75-76, 120-121; Donald Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 69.

²Hudson, Religion in America, p. 155; William Warren Sweet, Virginia Methodism--A History (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, 1940), p. 309; Richard Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, c. 1900), p. 8.

³Acts of the General Assembly, 1830, pp. 36-38.

⁴Peter Cartwright, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher (W. P. Strickland, editor), (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Company, 1859), p. 30.

⁵Ibid., p. 22.

⁶Ibid., p. 29.

⁷Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 68; Theodora L. Flood, D. D. and John W. Hamilton, D. D., Lives of Methodist Bishop (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1882), pp. 77-98.

⁸Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 9.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Sweet, Virginia Methodism, p. 309.

¹¹Albea Godbold, The Church College in the Old South (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1944), p. 46.

¹²W. H. Moore, D. D., An Historical Oration on the Life and Labors of Rev. Hezekiah G. Leigh, D. D., (Delivered in Kingston, North Carolina to the Historical Society of the North Carolina Conference, December 8, 1896), (Printed, 1897), p. 5.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 10; Moore, An Oration on Leigh, pp. 2-5.

- ¹⁵Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 11.
- ¹⁶Minutes, Annual Virginia Conference, Oxford, North Carolina, February 24, 1825.
- ¹⁷Minutes, Board of Trustees; Irby, History of Randolph-Macon, pp. 21-22.
- ¹⁸Minutes, Annual Virginia Conference, Portsmouth, Virginia, February 20, 1826.
- ¹⁹Minutes, Annual Virginia Conference, Portsmouth, Virginia, February 22, 1826.
- ²⁰Minutes, Annual Virginia Conference, Petersburg, Virginia, February, 1827.
- ²¹Minutes, Annual Virginia Conference, Raleigh, North Carolina, February, 1828.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Ibid.
- ²⁴Minutes, Annual Virginia Conference, Lynchburg, Virginia, February, 1829.
- ²⁵Ibid. One was William O. Goode, a member of the state legislature, State Constitutional Convention of 1829 and later a member of the United States Congress. The other three were Nathaniel Alexander, a wealthy planter and state legislator; John W. Lewis, an attorney who served as treasurer of the college until his death; and Rev. John G. Claiborne. Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, pp. 23-24.
- ²⁶Sweet, Virginia Methodism, p. 312.
- ²⁷Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, pp. 16-18.
- ²⁸Acts of the General Assembly, 1830, pp. 36-38.
- ²⁹Minutes, Annual Virginia Conference, Richmond, Virginia, February, 1830- William Goode, one of the four non-Methodists on the original Board of Trustees, introduced the bill to charter the college. Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 23.
- ³⁰Acts of the General Assembly, 1829-30.

³¹Minutes, Board of Trustees of Randolph-Macon College, April 9, 1830.

³²Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 21.

³³Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 9, 1830.

³⁴Minutes, Board of Trustees, October 30, 1830; Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, pp. 24-25.

³⁵Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 15, 1831.

³⁶Minutes, Board of Trustees, October 15, 1831.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸John Emory was a well known minister who served as Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He died at the height of his career; his name lives on in Emory University (Georgia) and Emory and Henry College (Virginia).

³⁹Parks was a minister in the Virginia Conference. He was released to accept a professional position with the new institution. Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, pp. 29-38.

⁴⁰Landon Garland, prior to accepting a position at Randolph-Macon, was Professor of Chemistry at Washington College, Lexington, Virginia. A native Virginian, he received his A.B. at Hampden-Sydney and immediately began teaching at Washington College. He served as President of Randolph-Macon College from 1836 to 1847. Sweet, Virginia Methodism, p. 315; Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 40.

⁴¹Robert Emory was the son of Bishop John Emory. Also a distinguished churchman, he later served as President of Dickinson College (Pennsylvania).

⁴²Minutes, Board of Trustees, October 15, 1831.

⁴³Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 26.

⁴⁴The Rev. Lorenzo Lea was a native of North Carolina and a graduate of the University of North Carolina. Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁵The Baltimore Conference declined the offer, noting that Dickinson College had been made a Methodist College and was more accessible. Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 51.

⁴⁶Minutes, Board of Trustees, July 4, 1832.

⁴⁷Sims was a Brunswick County native, the grandson of the Rev. Edward Dromgoole, one of the founders of the Virginia Conference. He earned A.B. and A.M. degrees from the University of North Carolina, and taught there three years before accepting a professorship at LaGrange College. Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, p. 43.

⁴⁸Minutes, Board of Trustees; Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, pp. 34-40.

⁴⁹Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 45-56.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 42.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 53-54.

⁵³Stephen Olin, The Works of Stephen Olin, D. D., LL. D., Late President of the Wesleyan University, Vol. II, "Collegiate Education," (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1852), p. 297.

⁵⁴George J. Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, A History of Emory and Henry College (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 10.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁵⁶Isaac Patton Martin, Methodism in Holston (Nashville, Tennessee: Parthenon Press, 1945), p. 54.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 49, 426; Martin, "Methodists Recognized Educational Needs in Section in Pioneer Times," (clipped newspaper article, n. d.); Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, pp. 12-16.

⁵⁸Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁹Minutes, Holston Annual Conference, 1825.

⁶⁰Minutes, Holston Annual Conference, 1828.

⁶¹Minutes, Holston Annual Conference, 1829; Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, p. 30.

⁶² Fulton was born November 28, 1802, in Grayson County, Virginia and died in Smyth County, Virginia, on September 16, 1861. He entered the ministry at nineteen as a self-taught circuit rider. Semi-Centennial Catalogue and Historical Register of Emory and Henry College, Washington County, Virginia, 1837-1887 (Tazewell, Virginia: Clinch Valley Newsprint, 1887), pp. 37-38. Fulton, a Methodist circuit rider, became a member of the Holston Conference in 1824 when that Conference and the Tennessee Conference separated. R. N. Price, Holston Methodism From Its Origin to the Present Time (Nashville, Tennessee: Smith and Lamar Publishing Agents, 1908), Vol. III, p. 53.

⁶³ Report from Creed Fulton, Agent of Holston Conference, on the Holston Seminary, 1835.

⁶⁴ Minutes, Holston Annual Conference, 1835.

⁶⁵ Creed Fulton, Address on the Subject of a Manual Labor College By a Committee of the Holston Conference (Abingdon, Virginia: Printed at the office of the Virginia Statesman, 1836).

⁶⁶ Notes (unpublished) entitled "Emory and Henry College Chartered as a Labor College." Price, Holston Methodism, pp. 54-66.

⁶⁷ Byars was Presbyterian; Smith and Findley, Methodists. Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, p. 36.

⁶⁸ Fulton, Address Manual Labor College.

⁶⁹ Notes, "Emory and Henry College."

⁷⁰ Report of Board of Trustees, Holston Seminary, to the Annual Conference September 30, 1836, p. 9.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 10.

⁷² Ibid., p. 11.

⁷³ Fulton, Address Manual Labor College, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 6-7; Price, Holston Methodism, pp. 66-67.

⁷⁵ Minutes, Holston Annual Conference, 1836; Semi-Centennial Catalogue, Emory and Henry College, p. 9.

⁷⁶ Constitution and Charter of Emory and Henry College, Abingdon, Virginia, 1838.

⁷⁷ Minutes, Holston Annual Conference, 1837.

⁷⁸Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, pp. 49-51.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 68-71.

⁸⁰Collins left Emory and Henry in 1852 to accept the presidency of Dickson College. Minutes, Board of Trustees, July 22, 1852. In 1860 he moved to Memphis, Tennessee as proprietor and president of the State Female School. He died there in 1875. Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, p. 83.

⁸¹Wiley, a native of Massachusetts, had succeeded Collins as principal of Augusta High School. Elected president of Emory and Henry in 1852, he served until 1879. Minutes, Board of Trustees, July 22, 1852; June 7, 1853; Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, p. 85; Washington County Historical Society of Abingdon, Virginia, XVI, December, 1949, p. 9.

⁸²Harlow, also a native of Massachusetts, remained at the college until 1842 when he returned to New England to preach. Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, p. 85.

⁸³In the minutes of the Holston Conference, 1836, Creed Fulton moved that a professorship be established at the college called the Wesleyan Professorship of Moral Science to "secure the education of the sons of Methodist preacher members of the Holston A. (Annual) Conference."

⁸⁴Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, pp. 70-75.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 75-76; Gibson, Sketch of Emory and Henry, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁶Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1839, pp. 135-136.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

Of the permanently founded denominational colleges chartered in Virginia between the Revolution and the Civil War, only one was located in that part of the state which separated in 1863 and entered the Union as West Virginia. The sparsity of population was in no small way a part of the reason; and had it not been for the efforts of Alexander Campbell, very probably no college would have emerged there prior to the Civil War.¹

Bethany College, chartered in 1840,² just prior to Richmond College, was the result of the effort and determination of the college's founder and principal benefactor, Alexander Campbell. Emphasizing the importance of education and the college founding efforts of other Protestant denominations, Campbell elicited support of area Campbellites--that is, Disciples of Christ--to promote and support their own seminary of higher education.

Of the college-founding denominations in Virginia during this period, the "Disciples" were the last to be organized as a denomination. Emerging as a separate denomination during the early 19th century when the Second Great Awakening efforts of men like Charles Finney were sparking a renewed interest in revivalism and

salvation, the Disciples were principally reformers within the ranks of the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterians. Critical of such developments as the hierarchical structure within the American Methodist (Episcopal) Church and interpretation of scripture, men like James O'Kelley and Abner Jones began to gravitate away from their established churches and speak of themselves as reformers or simply as Christians. In the early 1800's reform minded Presbyterians joined the list of reformers, the most important early convert being Barton W. Stone, a Kentucky minister who had been ordained in 1798 at the age of 26. Within three years Stone was voicing disagreement with established tenets and soon thereafter withdrew from the Presbytery, accompanied by four other ministers who, however, later returned to the Presbyterian fold. Stone was undaunted by others' opinions of his decision and with the support and assistance of others such as David Purviance, ruling elder in Stone's church, they organized the Kentucky Conference of Christians in 1804.³

By 1814 Christians in Virginia were numerous enough and adequately organized to hold their first conference, this being only the second state in which Christians held a conference. The denomination grew rapidly and in 1820 the first United States Christian Conference was held in Windham, Connecticut.

By 1860 the denomination claimed 680,666 members in 2,066 churches. Of the 180 permanent colleges noted by Tewksbury, five were founded by the Disciples, thus ranking the denomination as number eight in church membership and permanent college founding.

While they failed to unite all Christians, they did become one of the larger Protestant denominations.⁴

As a denomination they upheld several basic principles or beliefs, the more important being:

- (1) The right of the individual to interpret God's truth for himself.
- (2) Christian Character as the only vital test of fellowship.
- (3) The use of the name Christian to the exclusion of all party or sectarian names.
- (4) The Bible as a sufficient creed and role of faith and practice.
- (5) Christ as the head of the church (the early leaders thought they were answerable to God in the light of Christ's leadership, and not dependent on ecclesiastical authorities).
- (6) The union of all Christians.⁵

The association of Campbell with the "Christian" denomination led by Burton W. Stone grew out of the similarity between the beliefs of the followers of Campbell and those held by Stone. Emerging from a controversy within the Baptist denomination, the Disciples of Christ was a reform movement that was officially excluded from the Baptists in 1830. Dialogues between Stone and Campbell and among other church members led to the union of a large segment of the "Christians" with the Disciples on January 1, 1832, under the name Disciples of Christ or "Christian," an issue which has not been resolved to this day.⁶

As early as 1833 the Disciples attempted to found a college. Their initial effort, in New Albany, Indiana, was premature and not until 1836 did the Disciples successfully operate their first college. In that year a dispute at the Baptist College in Georgetown, Kentucky, led to an institutional split that resulted in the Disciples founding Bacon College. The "Christians" asserted that the "Regular Baptists"⁷ denied them the right to be unbiased and unsectarian, thus they were compelled to withdraw and establish their own institution. This institution operated until 1850, was revived in 1858, and in 1865 moved to Lexington, Kentucky, to become "heir to the property"⁸ of Transylvania University.⁹

The developments that ultimately resulted in a college at Bethany have their origin in the aspirations of Campbell himself.

Thomas Campbell, father of Alexander Campbell, had emigrated from Ireland in 1807. A graduate of Glasgow University and a Presbyterian minister, Thomas left his family until 1809 when his family joined him in western Pennsylvania where he had accepted a charge. His son Alexander attended Glasgow University between 1807 and 1809, and upon arriving in America soon joined his father as a reformer in the Presbyterian church.¹⁰

Thomas, Alexander and the congregation they had formed withdrew from the denomination in 1812 because of the Presbytery's failure to accept their views. In 1813 they united with the Redstone Baptist Association, an association which lasted until 1827. By that time Campbell's reforms were considered heterodoxy and the Baptists began

to disassociate with these reformers.¹¹

In 1811 Alexander married Margaret Brown, the only child of a well-to-do land owner, John Brown, who deeded his entire estate to his daughter and son-in-law to keep his daughter near him. Campbell's decision not to join his father in Anesville, Ohio, left him the master of his father-in-law's estate. His industry and astuteness in farming and business resulted in the accumulation of considerable wealth, and his prestige grew from the multiple tasks which he undertook and successfully accomplished. In 1829 he was elected one of the four delegates from western Virginia to the Constitutional Convention where he argued for universal white suffrage.¹²

His religious beliefs found support among area Baptists, a number of whom supported his reform views. Between 1823 and 1830 Alexander published at his own expense a monthly magazine, The Christian Baptist, in which he advanced his views. The publication of his reforms led to his alienation among Baptists, so that by 1830 Alexander and his followers were a distinct denomination. On January 4, 1830, Campbell published the first issue of a new and enlarged religious journal, The Millennial Harbinger. For thirty-four years Campbell published this journal, during which time he was the principal financial and literary contributor. Examination of these journals provides invaluable knowledge of and about his theological and personal views, including immense insight into the causes for establishing a college on his personal estate.¹³

An educated man himself, Campbell voiced his support of education through the Harbinger. In a series of articles in 1840 he observed that education involves four sectors: Family, School, College and Church; and that a marriage of all four was absolutely necessary.¹⁴

Campbell's attitude toward education, and in particular higher education, in no small way reflected his personal values. He believed that the intellectual appetites of men were superior to those of the body; therefore, education should be offered in a medium which allowed the individual to mature, or until he "on his full-fledged wings of intellectual maturity soars aloft."¹⁵

Like other denominations, "the Disciples must provide for an educated ministry,"¹⁶ stated Campbell. Perceiving education as the means of forming moral character, Campbell launched his project with little financial support from fellow Disciples. As early as 1836 Illinois Disciples were urging fellow churchmen to establish a college in the Mississippi Valley "for the purpose of educating youths in the knowledge of true science."¹⁷ Noting that in popular terms there was no clergy--since all are disciples--they argued that "it is necessary that persons employed in teaching, must, and ought to know, more than those whom they teach."¹⁸ Observing that Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and other groups had their own colleges, they concluded the absolute need for a Christian college operated by those who "have renounced all modern denominative names,

and sectarian peculiarities, and have taken the sacred oracles as the only sure and sufficient guide in all the concerns of faith and morals."¹⁹

Campbell editorialized in the same issue that since children came into the world, as Locke would say, tabula rosa, they must be educated to attain intellectual greatness or moral goodness. Noting that colleges frequently taught "the demoralizing works of pantheists, atheists, and deists,"²⁰ Campbell concluded that a college under the leadership of their denomination could promote "fine taste, true eloquence, and sound practical knowledge."²¹ Observing that all colleges and universities in America were "subservient to human needs and partisan establishments,"²² he urged the establishment of one devoted only to the Bible and the "Catholic principles of simple, ancient, apostolic Christianity."²³ However, to prevent disunion among "disciples" over the issue, Campbell urged that several months be devoted to studying the subject thoroughly so that there be unanimity or purpose.²⁴

In 1839 Campbell observed that about two hundred thousands Disciples of Christ were in the United States. Noting that other denominations were promoting their interests through the establishment of colleges, Campbell presented a prospectus to found one near Bethany. Located sixteen miles from Wheeling and thirty-eight from Pittsburg, the area was considered by Campbell to be healthy and pure. In addition Brooke County, in which Bethany is located, could boast of being a "moral county,"²⁵ not having evidenced any capital

offenses since its establishment. Commenting on the controversy between slavery and anti-slavery, he stated that while the state was a slave state, the county had few "colored people"²⁶ and they were docile. Thus the area seemed most propitious for the establishment of a "literary and moral institution."²⁷ Writing in the Harbinger during 1839 and 1840, Campbell continually interrelated education and morality--"the formation of moral character . . . is the supreme end of education, or rather is education itself."²⁸

Campbell's noble scheme was generally well received by the church's founders. Men like Barton W. Stone, Phillip S. Fall, John T. Johnson, Dr. Robert Richardson and Dr. S. E. Shepperd were all well educated by nineteenth century standards; and this certainly facilitated promotion of the college. To stimulate support for his college, Campbell donated the land for the college's location as well as \$15,000 with which to begin construction of suitable buildings. Solicitations among church members brought limited returns as the former were generally indigent. Undaunted, Campbell attempted to endow the college by appealing to Christians in various parts of the nation, however, to somewhat limited effect.²⁹ A list of donations published in 1842 indicated that \$17,688.00 was pledged by the end of the first year of operation, of which \$7,923.00 had actually been paid. This same report also revealed that a building for classes, four stories, 83 x 45 feet, and a Steward's Inn, four stories, 107 x 36 feet, had been completed.³⁰

Even as Campbell opened Bethany College, he was keenly aware of the attitude of Virginia Baptists toward the enterprise. Noting that the Religious Herald insinuated the institution to be less than collegiate calibre, he remarked:

I know not why these modest and magnanimous gentlemen should engross to themselves all the common sense, learning, and prudence in the world, and preclude us from the privilege of having a school to educate our own children. Have we not as good a right to undertake such an enterprize as they who assail us?³¹

Campbell continued by noting that Christians had assisted Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian efforts to found colleges, yet had often been denied admission. In conclusion he stated:

The age of sectarian hate is fast passing away; and we intend that, so far as we can, our college shall endeavor to accelerate the progress of liberal and comprehensive views, and to expose the true character of those little spirits whose only element is controversy, and whose only ailment is the faults, real or imaginary, of those who stand in the way of their schemes of rivalry and personal or sectarian aggrandizement.³²

By 1840 Alexander Campbell had gained considerable support for a college among some of the leaders in his denomination. No less than half of these leaders were from the vicinity of the proposed college and included, besides Alexander Campbell; Thomas, his elderly father; Matthew McKeever, a brother-in-law; and three sons-in-law, John C. Campbell, Albert G. Ewing and Robert Y. Henley. Other area denominational members were Dr. Robert Richardson, Campbell Tarr and William Stewart. All of these men appeared on the college's original Board of Trustees, as did several other distinguished churchmen from

other denominations, including Adamson Bentley, sponsor of the Mahoning Baptist Association and Samuel Church of Pittsburg. Although the board was represented by denominations other than the "Christians," all the members of the board were surely friends of Campbell and could be expected to support his views.³³

When the State Legislature convened in Richmond in 1840, John C. Campbell of Wheeling petitioned for a charter of incorporation. Granted on March 2, 1840, the charter stated the college was "for instruction of youth in the various branches of science and literature, the useful arts, agriculture, and the learned and foreign language."³⁴ The establishment of a theological professorship was explicitly prohibited. The faculty, defined as president and professors, were empowered to determine the governing rules and course of study; however, any faculty member could be removed by a two-thirds vote of the board of trustees.³⁵

The board was thus ultimately autonomous. It could be no less than twelve nor more than thirty, and vacancies were to be filled by the remaining members. Degrees could be conferred by authorization of the president and seven trustees, a minimal majority should the board number but twelve.³⁶

The charter also provided that the first board meeting should be held on the second Monday in May. Thus on Monday, May 11, 1840, the first meeting of the trustees convened, nine in attendance. Alexander's elderly father, Thomas Campbell, was elected chairman, and

Alexander, treasurer. At the board's second meeting on September 18, Alexander was also named President.³⁷

Alexander Campbell continued to maintain the position of leadership until his death in 1866. The early records of the college verify that Campbell was the institution's principal benefactor. Indeed, the land had been his, and the college's first permanent building--called College Proper--was constructed by a personal loan from Campbell.³⁸

Not until October, 1841, did the first students arrive. Numbering about 100, they first met in the Steward's Inn, where they were quartered, had their meals and attended classes, awaiting completion of the college's first major building.³⁹

The original faculty consisted of Campbell, president and professor of Sacred History, Mental Philosophy, Political Economy, and Evidences of Christianity. Others included Andrew F. Ross of Ohio, languages; Charles Stewart of Kentucky, mathematics; Dr. Robert Richardson, a local doctor and trustee, physical sciences; and W. K. Pendleton,⁴⁰ another son-in-law, natural philosophy, "and such of the natural sciences as come not in the course of Dr. R. Richardson."⁴¹

The curriculum in general was modeled after that at the University of Virginia. Campbell, an ardent admirer of Jefferson, apparently felt that if religion could integrate the program as offered at the University, it would meet the needs of Bethany's students. The Bible, therefore, became the principal text.⁴²

That the instruction was religiously oriented can hardly be debated. For the first few years Campbell himself began each of the six instructional days with religious studies, required of all students. In 1855-56 efforts were initiated to have the legislature amend the charter to permit establishment of a ministerial department. However, an unfortunate fire that destroyed the college's main building prevented pursuance of this effort. Writing in the Millennial Harbinger, February, 1842, Campbell observed "that Colleges are public nuisances unless under the control of religion and morality."⁴³ Believing his institution unique in its emphasis on Biblical studies, Campbell personally directed the college's operations for over 25 years, until his death in 1866.⁴⁴

In this era of intense denominational fervor, the Disciples were able to provide their flock with higher educational opportunities primarily because of the commitment of the denomination's founder and Bethany College's principal benefactor. One might speculate that the denomination would have not had a college in rural western Virginia as early as 1840 had it not been for the efforts and beneficence of Alexander Campbell. Thus in 1840 the Disciples joined the ranks of those institutions competing for students to carry on the task of their respective denominations.

At the same time the Disciples were securing a charter for a college from the state legislature, Virginia Baptists were drafting a petition to present to the legislature for their own institution.

Two days after the Disciples received a charter from the General Assembly, the Baptists were granted a charter to establish Richmond College.

Chapter IV: Footnotes

¹William Thomas Moore, A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), p. 363.

²Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1840, pp. 95-97.

³Simon Addison Bennett, The Christian Denomination and Christian Doctrine (Dayton, Ohio: The Christian Publishing Association, c. 1940), pp. 13-26.

⁴Donald Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 69; Winthrop Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 124.

⁵Bennett, The Christian Denomination, p. 28.

⁶Winfred Ernest Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1931), pp. 145-154.

⁷Alexander Campbell, editor, The Millerial Harbinger, Bethany (West) Virginia, January, 1836.

⁸Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, p. 169.

⁹Ibid., pp. 168-169.

¹⁰William K. Woolery, Bethany Years: The Story of Old Bethany From Her Founding Years Through a Century of Trial and Triumph (Huntington, West Virginia: Standard Printing and Publishing Company, 1941), pp. 11-16.

¹¹Ibid., p. 20; Perry E. Gresham, The Sage of Bethany: A Pioneer in Broadcloth (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960), p. 13;

¹²Gresham, The Sage of Bethany, pp. 13-14.

¹³Woolery, Bethany Years, pp. 21-24.

¹⁴Millennial Harbinger, February, 1840; Woolery, Bethany Years, pp. 28-30.

- ¹⁵S. Morris Eanes, The Philosophy of Alexander Campbell (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Standard Press, 1966), p. 96; Ibid., pp. 69-82.
- ¹⁶Moore, History of the Disciples, p. 364.
- ¹⁷Millennial Harbinger, April, 1836.
- ¹⁸Ibid.
- ¹⁹Ibid.
- ²⁰Ibid.
- ²¹Ibid.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Ibid.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid., April, 1839; October, 1839; February, 1840.
- ²⁶Ibid., February, 1840.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸Ibid.
- ²⁹Moore, History of the Disciples, pp. 364-366; Gresham, Sage of Bethany, p. 18.
- ³⁰Millennial Harbinger, January, 1842.
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Woolery, Bethany Years, p. 31.
- ³⁴Acts of the Assembly, pp. 95-97.
- ³⁵Ibid., Program of the International Centennial Celebration and Conventions of the Disciples of Christ (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania: n. p., 1909), p. 71.
- ³⁶Acts of the Assembly, pp. 95-97.

³⁷Minutes, Board of Trustees, May 11, 1840 in Millennial Harbinger, June, 1840; Minutes, Board of Trustees, September 18, 1840 in Millennial Harbinger, October, 1840.

³⁸Millennial Harbinger, May, 1842; Woolery, Bethany Years, p. 35; Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. IV.

³⁹Millennial Harbinger, May, 1842.

⁴⁰Pendleton remained at the college over forty years, despite the early death of his wife Lavinia, Alexander Campbell's daughter. After the death of Campbell he served as the college's president.

⁴¹Gresham, The Sage of Bethany, p. 19.

⁴²Ibid., p. 20/

⁴³Millennial Harbinger, February, 1842.

⁴⁴Francis S. Drake, Dictionary of American Biography (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1872, republished Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1974), p. 157.

CHAPTER V

THE BAPTISTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

"The Baptists were Congregationalists who had become convinced that if churches were to be composed of believers only, then baptism should be restricted to those who were able to give some account of their own faith."¹

Dissenters among New England and English Congregationalists provided the impetus that ultimately led to the creation of a separated denomination known as Baptist. Roger William's activities early led to Rhode Island becoming a center of Baptist growth in the seventeenth century; and in 1707 the Philadelphia Baptist Association was organized by churches in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Within a short time churches in Connecticut, New York, Maryland and Virginia had joined the Association. Through the efforts of this Association the College of Rhode Island (Brown University) was chartered in 1764 to train its ministers.²

Enjoying rapid growth³ during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because of emotional and popular zeal, the denomination claimed 12,139 churches in 1860 with 4,039,928 seating accommodations; of the 180 permanent colleges noted by Tewksbury Baptists claimed twenty-five, the third largest number.⁴ These

figures assume more significant stature when one realizes that a majority of these institutions were founded primarily in a thirty-year period preceding the Civil War. Having drawn a large proportion of their membership from a frontier society, the Baptists were either slow to appreciate the value of a college educated ministry or unable to require high educational standards.⁵

In 1765 there were more than fifty Baptist churches in Virginia; ministers for these were supplied largely by English Baptist churches. When independence was secured and the supply line from London was closed, Virginia Baptists found their churches led by men high in faith, but low in education. Within a few years, however, members of the denomination were initiating efforts to provide their educational needs.⁶

Apparently the first organized effort by Baptists to establish an institution of higher education in Virginia was initiated not by Virginia Baptists but by President James Manning of Providence College. In a letter to the General Committee of the United Baptist Churches in Virginia in 1788, Manning urged the Baptists in Virginia "to erect a seminary of learning;"⁷ in response the General Committee appointed a committee of ten persons, five from each side of the James River, "to forward the business respecting the seminary of learning."⁸ In 1793 the General Committee created a Board of Trustees of fourteen Baptists, who were to appoint seven additional board members from other religious groups to promote and encourage the establishment of

a seminary. Obviously the group met with little success, as a circular letter distributed in 1809 stated that lack of funds necessitated abandoning the project.⁹

When the prominent Baptist missionary Luther Rice returned from India in 1813, he encouraged American Baptists to establish seminaries to train ministers for world evangelization. Out of this appeal appeared several institutions including the founding of Columbian College in Washington, D. C., in 1821. Being in accord with the doctrines and ideals of Virginia Baptists, the college provided educational opportunities for Virginia Baptists, especially in the east for those who desired to enter the ministry. The effect was thus to retard the founding in Virginia of an institution of higher education.¹⁰

In general Virginia Baptists were split over the necessity of formally establishing institutions of higher education. The Goshen Association stated in its 1808 circular letter that Peter and John were "unlearned";¹¹ this view apparently was supported by a large number of Virginia Baptists as not until Luther Rice's appeal for educated missionaries does there seem to be a serious effort in Virginia to have an educated ministry.¹²

As a result of the missionary appeal led by Rice, Virginia Baptists established four education societies by 1820: The Richmond Baptist Education Society, The Winchester Baptist Education Society, The Baptist Education Society of Albemarle and The Baptist Education Society at Powhatan. Through the efforts of these groups and men

like Robert Semple and Eli Ball, support was generated for Columbian College in Washington, D. C. Indeed, Semple served as President of the board of trustees in 1827. When the Religious Herald began publication in 1828, it supported the Washington institution and encouraged Virginia Baptists to contribute to its operation and to send prospective ministerial candidates. During the 1820's contributions from Virginia established a professorship of mathematics and natural philosophy and helped to create an endowment to pay the president. The student body also reflected Virginia's support; no other state equalled the number of students from Virginia, and one year the ratio was four to one.¹³

Despite the apparent marriage of Virginia Baptists to Columbian College in the 1820's, some Baptist leaders in Virginia continued to urge the establishment of a seminary in Virginia itself. The efforts of Baptists in Georgia, Kentucky and South Carolina probably stimulated interests in state denominational pride. In addition, the Methodists were actively planning the opening of Randolph-Macon College. Since the Methodist and Baptist churches were the chief contestants for the frontier, the establishment of a college by one group certainly intensified an already existing rivalry. Walter Brownlow Posey in The Baptist Church in the Lower Mississippi Valley 1776-1845 noted: "The Baptist Church battled hard and unceasingly against all opponents but saved the greater part of its strength for its war against the Christian and Methodist churches."¹⁴

By 1828 those who supported a Baptist Seminary in Virginia were campaigning vigorously for such an institution; examination of the Religious Herald indicates the Baptists actively published articles and letters in support of education in general.¹⁵ During 1829 supporters of Baptist education actively advocated Baptist educational efforts in the state, and articles in the Religious Herald endorsed the establishment of a Baptist seminary in the state.¹⁶

When the Baptist General Association of Virginia met in Richmond in June, 1830, the pro-education forces were well organized. On June 8, 1830, in the Second Baptist Church of Richmond, prominent Virginia Baptists began the Virginia Baptist Education Society to provide "for the improvement of young men, who . . . are called to the ministry."¹⁷ The purpose of the Society as stated in its Constitution was:

to afford brethren of the Baptist denomination, regularly licensed to the work of the ministry, who give satisfactory evidence of their piety, good standing, call to the ministry, and capacity for improvement and usefulness, the means of acquiring knowledge, . . . to preach the gospel of Christ.¹⁸

Among the original officers of the Society were Edward Baptist, first vice-president, and Eli Ball, second vice-president. The president was John Kerr; other officers were Henry Keelings, corresponding secretary, James B. Taylor, recording secretary, and Richard C. Wortham, treasurer. All except Wortham were ministers; Wortham was a Richmond businessman.¹⁹

To achieve its goal the Society recommended that educated ministers take students into their homes and teach them as best they could. A sort of internship, the program offered two courses of study: (1) literary, leading to entry into Columbian College or some other institution, and (2) theological, a two year terminal course²⁰ preparing one for immediate service as a minister. Financial assistance would be derived from membership dues in the Society, donations to the Society and from students preaching in local churches. Upon completion of a course of study a committee of the Education Society would examine the students to approve their success.²¹

In August, the Society appointed Edward Baptist the first teacher.²² Baptist, born in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, in 1790, was the son of William G. Baptist, a merchant, and Margaret L. Baptist. His father was an Episcopalian; his mother, Presbyterian. Educated by his father, Baptist entered Hampden-Sydney College to study medicine and graduated in 1813 with the A.B. degree. He taught school in Halifax County, 1813-14, and the next year re-entered Hampden-Sydney to study theology. In 1815 he earned his A.M. degree.²³

That same year he was ordained a Baptist minister; only seven years earlier he had joined the Presbyterian Church. As possibly the best educated Baptist clergyman, Baptist had been influential in the formation of the Baptist General Association of Virginia in 1823 and in the Virginia Baptist Education Society in 1830. It was thus quite logical that he should be the Society's first choice.²⁴

Pastor of a Baptist Church in Powhatan County, Baptist began instructing at his home, "Dunlora." For "near two years"²⁵ Baptist--without pay--instructed students at his home; in June, 1831, another Baptist minister, Eli Ball of Richmond, joined Baptist. From 1830 to 1832 the two men instructed thirteen students, nine under Baptist and four under Ball.²⁶

The need for a Baptist seminary in Virginia was apparent. In 1832 there were some four hundred Baptist churches in the state and only about 260 ministers. This number included those only licensed to preach, as well as many who were virtually uneducated. The creation of the Virginia Baptist General Association nine years earlier had greatly improved the chances for a cooperative venture in education, and Edward Baptist's venture was a logical beginning.²⁷

At a meeting December 2, 1831, the Board of the Virginia Baptist Education Society appointed a committee to consider securing a charter for the Seminary.²⁸

After conferring with an attorney, Benjamin W. Lee, the committee concluded:

By a conveyance of property to well selected trustees no difficulty or danger would arise, and moreover, that if a form of bequest containing the names of trustees be prepared, legacies may be legally received and applied to the use of the Education Society.²⁹

The legal advice was found not to be valid and the society lost several monetary gifts, since the state of Virginia did not recognize

an unchartered institution. Two losses were a \$300 legacy of Reverend James D. McAllister and a \$1,000 legacy of Mr. Saunders of Northumberland.³⁰

Experiencing financial problems caused the Board in January, 1832, to revise its policy of admitting only ministerial candidates and to open the Seminary to "young men of good moral character . . ."³¹ Unlike the ministerial students, these young men were expected to pay the entire cost of their education.

Baptist's meager beginning was further advanced in 1832. The ratio of ministers to churches had not improved; indeed at the Baptist General Association of Virginia meeting in June, 1833, there were 430 churches served by 210 ministers, leaving over half of the churches without a minister.³²

During the winter and spring of 1832 the Education Society made plans for an expanded educational enterprise. Spring Farm, a 241-acre tract of land about five miles north of Richmond just off Brook Road in Henrico County, was purchased for \$4,000. The Society's intention was to found a manual labor seminary which would support a larger enrollment. Edward Baptist was invited to head the Virginia Baptist Seminary, but his health prevented acceptance, and in 1835 he moved to Marengo County, Alabama. He served as pastor of several rural churches there until his death in 1863.³³

The Society then appointed Robert Ryland to be the institution's first principal. A student at Humanity Hall Academy in Hanover County and an 1826 graduate of Columbian College, Ryland served as

pastor in Lynchburg from 1827 until his appointment to head the Seminary in 1832.³⁴

On July 4, 1832, the Virginia Baptist Seminary began operation at "Spring Farm" under the direction of Robert Ryland. Opening enrollment was ten, but by summer the number totaled twenty-six, of whom sixteen were "beneficiaries," those approved by the churches for the ministry and whose tuition was paid for them. The others were "moral upstanding youths"³⁵ who paid their own fees and provided the basic cost of the instruction.³⁶

Assisted by Eli Ball, Ryland instructed the young men in English, Latin, Greek, mathematics, and of course, the Bible. The students were also expected to devote three hours, five days a week to manual labor, a requirement that proved unsuitable.³⁷ A clue to the inefficiency of the operation may be found in a letter from Robert Ryland to his father, Josiah, in Clarkston, King and Queen County, July 1, 1834. He noted the decision to move the seminary closer to the city and indicated the board was unable to manage the farm, that their "superintendence of it is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint."³⁸

While the members and supporters of the Virginia Baptist Education Society were resolving the plan to move the Seminary closer to Richmond, a group of Baptists in the Williamsburg area led by Scervant Jones and J. S. Baker urged the establishment of a theological school near the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. They observed that ministerial students could attend literary classes

gratis at the college and receive their theological instruction nearby.³⁹ The Virginia Education Society rejected the invitation,⁴⁰ but Baker and Jones continued their appeal. In a letter to the Religious Herald, May 19, 1837, Baker argued for the need of a good theological seminary, and noted that the Virginia Baptist Seminary could only provide its students "a few crumbs of literature and a few fragments of theology."⁴¹ Despite their fervent efforts, they failed to gain state support and the move to Williamsburg was not accomplished.⁴² Because Williamsburg was reported to be unhealthy, the move to that city was opposed in favor of Richmond which they felt was "adapted to the needs of (their) ministry, . . ."⁴³

The decision to move the seminary closer to the city was noted in the 4th Annual Report of the Virginia Baptist Education Society on June 20, 1834. A 7 3/4 acre estate, "Columbia," was purchased for \$9,500, one third down, the balance to be paid in two annual installments. In December, 1834, the seminary moved to its new location and began the new year in its new facilities--the brick mansion and outbuildings, home of Mrs. Clara Haxall, from whom the estate had been purchased.⁴⁴

The catalogue published in January, 1835, reported an enrollment of sixty students. Two additional instructors had been added: Caleb Burnley, of Culpeper, who remained only until the end of the session; and William F. Nelson, "formerly of Georgetown College, Kentucky, recently of Newton Theological Institute, Massachusetts."⁴⁵ During the 1830's the number of faculty members constantly remained

three. Ryland served as principal every year except during 1835-36 when he was the chaplain at the University of Virginia; Nelson acted as principal during his absence.⁴⁶

During the 1830's the literary and theological curricula of the seminary expanded. All students pursued the literary curriculum during their first two years; theology students then pursued courses in the theological department during their last two years, and in 1837 a fifth year was added to the theological curriculum.⁴⁷

Enrollments rose gradually during the decade. From an enrollment of ten in 1832 the figure rose to forty-eight in 1838, sixty in 1839 and sixty-six in 1840, the year the Seminary was chartered as a college.⁴⁸

The decision to seek a charter transforming the seminary into a college apparently was initiated by the Society on January 10, 1836. A committee consisting of J. B. Jeter, Henry Keeling, A. Snead, James Thomas, and James B. Taylor was instructed to study the propriety of obtaining a charter. On February 14, the committee reported that to request a charter was inexpedient at the time.⁴⁹

At the eight annual meeting of the Virginia Baptist Education Society held in Richmond in early June, 1838, a resolution was adopted that (1) acknowledged benefit of a collegiate education for ministers and (2) recognized reasons for securing a charter for the Seminary.⁵⁰ Yet the resolution recommended that for the present ministerial students who desired collegiate educations should be encouraged to attend Columbian College and that it was inexpedient

to secure a charter for the seminary. This delay in elevating the seminary to collegiate status seems to have been the result of an intradenominational rivalry among those Baptists who desired the seminary to become a collegiate institution; those who wished the seminary to remain under the direct control of the church, which would not have been permitted if the seminary received a state charter; and those who supported Columbian College as being adequate to meet the needs of ministerial students who desired a collegiate education.

Other decisions regarding the operation of the seminary included making the manual labor performed by students voluntary and urging pastors to take up collections for the operation of the seminary.⁵¹

At the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Virginia Baptist Education Society held in Richmond on June 3, 1839, several contributions or bequests were noted. Of interest was a "legacy of \$1,000, which it is feared the society may lose for want of a charter, . . ."⁵² The subject of chartering the institution was seriously considered.

Reasons for chartering included:

It will increase the security of the tenure by which you hold your property; enable you to share in state grants from the Literary fund; facilitate your obtaining legacies, and elevate the character and augment the influence of the Institution.⁵³

There were at least two other reasons for chartering an institution:

(1) the literary students were becoming the larger group within the institution; thus, survival helped to dictate this decision and

(2) since the Education Society was governed by a board, it might eventually become ineffectual should board members try to leave their positions to their heirs who might be less disposed to the Society's aims and goals. Noting that if chartered, the institution had to be entirely literary, one suggestion was to append to the college an unchartered Theological Institution.⁵⁴

On June 3, 1839, the Society appointed a committee of nine, led by Robert Ryland, to consider the expediency of securing a charter. The next day that committee recommended "that a committee of nine persons be appointed to obtain from the next Legislature a charter for a college, to be located in or near the city."⁵⁵ The motion was carried; those appointed to the committee were Colonel Hudgins, Jesse Snead, Archibald Thomas, Dr. A. Snead, Clement Read, William Sands, James Sizer, L. W. Allen and Richard Reins.⁵⁶

The Religious Herald stated that the proposed college would be chartered as a literary institution, since a theological institution would be in violation of the Constitution and the doctrine of separation of church and state. It added, however, that theological training could be appended to the institution.⁵⁷

In December the board presented a list of thirty individuals to serve as the institution's first board of trustees, and on December 30, increased the list to thirty-seven; the name adopted for the proposed institution was Richmond College.⁵⁸ Dr. Ryland, in his notes, stated he preferred a name more identifiable with the Baptist denomination, but the Board wished "to divert the college of sectarian prejudice."⁵⁹

Although the new institution was non-sectarian, the original board was mainly Baptists. Since the board was self-perpetuating, it was assumed they would retain control "to the end of time."⁶⁰ Ryland critically observed that the charter of Washington and Lee required a majority of its trustees to be Presbyterians and yet it considered itself "unsectarian."⁶¹

On March 4, 1840, the state legislature granted a charter to thirty-seven men, designated by the Society, to be the trustees of Richmond College.⁶² Opening as a collegiate institution that fall under President Robert Ryland, the college offered two years of preparatory work and two years of collegiate studies. In 1845 a junior year was added and in 1848 a senior year.⁶³

At its annual meeting in June, 1840, the board of the Education Society recommended transfer of property and endowments to the trustees of Richmond which was effected January, 1843. They urged Virginia Baptists to ardently support the new institution. At the annual meeting in Charlottesville in June, 1841, the board recommended transfer of the seminary's property and endowments to the trustees of the college if they should agree to admit free of charge except board "all ministers and candidates for the ministry of the Baptist denomination"⁶⁴ recommended by the Society; should the college fail, the property reverted to the trustees of the Education Society, which retained the right to select a list of ten names from which vacancies on the Board of Trustees would be filled.⁶⁵

That Richmond College was the outgrowth of Baptist pride and ambition may certainly be stated. The Religious Herald, December 8, 1840, noted:

To keep pace with other denominations, there must be a greater increase of knowledge, both in the private members and ministry.

Other denominations, much inferior to ours in numbers and resources, have their respective Colleges.⁶⁶

A later issue observed that other Virginia institutions were receiving Baptist sons, and that the Presbyterians, while less numerous, operated successfully two colleges less than one hundred miles apart.⁶⁷ Some years later this religious rivalry continued; an article in the Herald stated: "By patronizing the schools of other denominations, we are building up sects that are antagonistic to our own."⁶⁸

Thus were realized the goals and aspirations of Virginia Baptists committed to the belief in higher education. Like their fellow Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists and Christians (Disciples of Christ), the Baptists were now able to provide their own ministers and civil leaders the opportunity for higher education in an environment complimentary of Baptist tenets and ideas.

Ten years lapsed between the chartering of Richmond College and the chartering of the last permanent denominational college prior to the Civil War. Lutherans in the western part of the state, while interested in education much earlier, were not able to charter their own collegiate institution until 1850.

Chapter V: Footnotes

¹Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 43.

²Hudson, Religion in America, pp. 43-45; Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1962), p. 11.

³By 1800 the Baptists were the largest denomination in America. Hudson, Religion in America, p. 115.

⁴Donald Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 69.

⁵Tewksbury, Founding of Colleges and Universities, pp. 90-91; Hudson, Religion in America, p. 116; Walter Brownlow Posey, The Baptist Church in the Lower Mississippi Valley 1776-1845 (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 100.

⁶Robert B. C. Howell, D. D., The Early Baptists of Virginia (Philadelphia: The Bible and Publication Society, 1857), p. 50; Robert B. Semple, History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: John O'Lynch, Printer, 1810), p. 385.

⁷Semple, History of the Baptists in Virginia, p. 78.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.; W. Harrison Daniel, "To Erect a Seminary of Learning," The Virginia Baptist Register, V (Richmond, Virginia: Publication by the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, 1966), p. 196.

¹⁰R. E. Gaines, The First Hundred Years (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet G. Shepperson, 1932), pp. 17-18; Robert Ryland, D. D., The Society--The Seminary--The College (Introduction by Charles H. Ryland, D. D.) (Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Company, Printers, 1890). For additional information about Rice, see James B. Taylor, Virginia Baptist Ministers (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, Series I, 1859), pp. 460-465.

¹¹Daniel, "To Erect A Seminary," pp. 198-199.

- ¹²R. E. Gaines, First Hundred Years, pp. 17-18.
- ¹³Daniel, "To Erect A Seminary," pp. 201-202; Garnett Ryland, The Baptists of Virginia, 1699-1926 (Richmond, Virginia: The Virginia Baptist Board of Missions and Education, 1955), p. 223.
- ¹⁴Daniel, "To Erect A Seminary," p. 204; Walter B. Posey, Baptist in Lower Mississippi Valley, p. 139; for additional material, see pp. 99-139.
- ¹⁵Religious Herald, October, 1828.
- ¹⁶Religious Herald, July, 1829; August, 1829; December, 1829.
- ¹⁷Minutes of the Virginia Baptist Education Society; June 8, 1830, in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, p. 1.
- ¹⁸Minutes of the Virginia Baptist Education Society, June, 1830, p. 3.
- ¹⁹Minutes, VBES, June, 1830, p. 8; Garnett Ryland, Baptists of Virginia, pp. 224-226.
- ²⁰The terminal program was three years if a student entered without adequate knowledge of the English language.
- ²¹Minutes, VBES, June, 1830, p. 10.
- ²²Minutes, VBES, August, 1830.
- ²³Notes prepared by Dr. Woodford B. Hackley, Secretary of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society and used in an article published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, August, 1955.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Diary of Edward Baptist, VBHS, p. 13.
- ²⁶Eighth Annual Meeting of the General Association of Virginia, Held at Lynchburg, Virginia, June 4-7, 1831 (Richmond, Virginia: Printed at the office of the Religious Herald, 1831), p. 21; R. E. Gaines, First Hundred Years, p. 20. The Religious Herald, June, 1831, reported six students in attendance during the first year.
- ²⁷R. E. Gaines, First Hundred Years, pp. 18-19; Ninth Annual Meeting of the Virginia Baptist Education Society (Richmond, Virginia June 3, 1839), p. 21; Robert Ryland, Seminary Notes, October 20, 1884.

- ²⁸Minutes, VBES, January 16, 1832, pp. 32-33.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 33.
- ³⁰Religious Herald, December 7, 1843.
- ³¹Minutes, VBES, January 16, 1832, p. 33.
- ³²Tenth Annual Meeting of the General Association of Virginia; Held at the First Baptist Church in the City of Richmond on Saturday June 1st, 1833 (Richmond, Virginia: Religious Herald office, 1833), p. 8.
- ³³Minutes, VBES, p. 50; June 11, 1832; January 16, 1832, pp. 32-34, March 31, 1832, pp. 35-38; May 31, 1832, pp. 42-44. William Rush Loving, Jr., "Spring Farm and the Virginia Baptist Seminary," unpublished Bachelor's thesis, University of Richmond, May 21, 1956; notes, Woodford Hackley, VBHS.
- ³⁴N. A., typed notes, VBHS; Minutes, VBES, April, 1832, p. 38; Garnett Tyland, Baptists of Virginia, p. 227.
- ³⁵Religious Herald, November 23, 1843.
- ³⁶Garnett Ryland, Baptists of Virginia, p. 227.
- ³⁷Minutes, VBES, September, 1833.
- ³⁸Letter from Robert Ryland to his father, Josiah, in Clarkston, King and Queen County, July 1, 1834. Ms, VBHS.
- ³⁹Jones was an attorney who entered the ministry later in life. Religious Herald, October 31, 1929.
Letter from Jones to Elder Lewis A. Alderson, Union Monroe County, Virginia, July 15, 1836. Ms, VBHS; Minutes, VBES, June 25, November 1, 1834; W. Harrison Daniel, "The Virginia Baptist Seminary 1832-1843--Part I," The Virginia Baptist Register, IX (Richmond, Virginia: Published by the VBHS, 1970), p. 399.
- ⁴⁰Minutes, VBES, April 27, 1835, pp. 149-150.
- ⁴¹Religious Herald, May 19, 1837.
- ⁴²One might assume the clout of Richmond Baptist to have been a factor, as well as the undesirable association of Williamsburg and the college with Episcopalianism (Anglicanism).

⁴³Religious Herald, June 2, 1837.

⁴⁴Minutes, VBES, June, 1834, pp. 119-120.

⁴⁵Minutes, VBES, September, 1834, p. 131.

⁴⁶Minutes, VBES, July 6, 1835, pp. 155-156; Daniel, "Seminary--Part I," pp. 394-395. Nelson left the Seminary at the end of the 1838-39 session. Minutes, VBES, September 17, 1838, p. 218.

⁴⁷Minutes, VBES, November 21, 1838, p. 220.

⁴⁸Proceedings of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, June, 1838; June, 1839; June, 1840.

⁴⁹Minutes, VBES, January 10, 1836; February 14, 1836.

⁵⁰Proceedings of the BGA of Virginia, June, 1838.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Proceedings of the BGA of Virginia, June, 1839. Since neither the VBES nor the seminary was legally chartered gifts to either could be challenged. W. H. Daniel, "The Virginia Baptist Seminary 1832-1842--Part II," The Virginia Baptist Register, X (Richmond, Virginia: Published by the VBHS, 1971), p. 475.

⁵³Proceedings of the BGA of Virginia, June, 1839.

⁵⁴Proceedings of the BGA of Virginia, June, 1839; Religious Herald, July 14, 1839.

⁵⁵Minutes, VBES, June 4, 1839, pp. 229-230.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Religious Herald, July 14, 1839. At the annual meeting of the VBES held in June, 1840, a justification for the proposed charter was presented. The Board noted that the charter would be similar to that of Randolph-Macon College. This statement would thus assure fellow Baptists their college would train ministers in their tenets as indeed the Methodists already were doing at their institution.

⁵⁸Minutes, VBES, December 16, 30, 1839, pp. 238-240.

⁵⁹Robert Ryland, Seminary Notes, October 20, 1884.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1839-1840,
pp. 92-95.

⁶³ R. E. Gaines, First Hundred Years, p. 25.

⁶⁴ Proceedings of the BGA of Virginia, June, 1841.

⁶⁵ Proceedings of the BGA of Virginia, June, 1840; June, 1843.

⁶⁶ Religious Herald, December 8, 1840.

⁶⁷ Religious Herald, December 21, 1843.

⁶⁸ Religious Herald, August 7, 1856.

CHAPTER VI

THE LUTHERANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

In 1714 about fifty German Protestant families settled along the Rappahannock River in what is now Madison County. From this initial settlement grew the German Lutheran population in Virginia's western frontier. The growth of the Lutheran denomination may be observed from the fact that in 1793 four Lutheran ministers organized the Virginia Conference, which was among the first organizations of Lutherans in America. In 1820 Virginia Lutherans joined with fellow brethren in Maryland to create the Synod of Maryland and Virginia; and in 1829 the two groups split, thus attesting to the growing influence and members of Lutherans in Virginia.¹

True to the tenets of the Protestant Reformation, the Virginia Lutheran supported the idea of an educated laity. Thus many of the early Congregations supported grammar schools, usually conducted by the pastor or his assistant. Higher education was another matter; among the rural Lutheran population were those who believed it unnecessary, especially in Virginia, where most were satisfied with the Gettysburg Theological Seminary, established in 1826 and Pennsylvania College (now Gettysburg College) chartered in 1832. To many of these hard working agrarians an educated ministry supplied by

the Pennsylvania institutions was quite adequate. Apparently Lutheran cohesiveness did not extend to support of a Lutheran College; those few who did desire higher education had the opportunity to do so at other state institutions or at an institution beyond the limits of Virginia.²

What then did precipitate interest in college founding among this group was the initiative and charisma of David F. Bittle, a man whose name is synomous with Lutheran higher education in Virginia.

Bittle was part of a generation that witnessed significant denominational fervor. A native of Pennsylvania, Bittle was reared in a home with strong German Lutheran influences; indeed German was the Middletown Valley community language, and Bittle's association with English was limited until his teens. The Rev. Abraham Reck, pastor of Bittle's church and a founder of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary, exerted an influence on the young man that resulted in his decision to enter the ministry.³

Entering the preparatory department of Gettysburg Gymnasium⁴ in 1830, Bittle remained at the institution earning his bachelor's degree in 1835. For the next two years he studied theology at Gettysburg Seminary, and served as a tutor. While studying at the seminary he met Louisa Catherine Krauth, sister of the president of the college, and on November 13, 1837, the two were married.⁵

As a young seminary graduate, the opportunities were extensive. Ministers, especially those who were well-educated, were in short supply. St. John's congregation in Middlebrook (Augusta County)

eagerly sought Bittle, or at least Captain George Shuey, who had been entrusted with securing a minister, eagerly sought him. Apparently others questioned the necessity of going "all the way to Maryland for that man."⁶

His ministerial charge encompassed an area about eighteen miles long by ten miles wide and included two churches, St. John's in Middlebrook and Jennings Branch Church (now St. Peter's) at the base of the mountains between Jennings Gap and Buffalo Gap. In addition to these two churches, he served one in Rockingham County--Frieden's--for about two years.⁷

His ardent Lutheranism may be assumed from the successful efforts at establishing a new church which would be completely separate from the Reformed believers who shared a church with the Lutheran congregation. Thus was born Mount Tabor.⁸

As the Synod of Virginia grew--in 1838 six names were added--it became a more viable organization. Bittle became more involved. Serving as Secretary and later President of the Educational Society, an organization devoted to securing funds for ministerial education, and as Secretary of the Synod of Virginia, he became known for his industry at collecting funds for Lutheran projects. Indeed, his own Mount Tabor congregation subscribed \$1,019 toward a \$150,000 national drive to endow five Lutheran educational institutions.⁹

While the Synod of Virginia was making organizational advances in the 1830's, it did not include in its membership all of the Lutheran congregations within the state. Until May 21, 1842, churches

west of Roanoke County were in affiliation with the Synod of North Carolina. With the formation of the Synod of Western Virginia that year, Virginia Lutherans were organized so as to promote the growth and development of Lutheranism in Virginia. By an agreement with the Synod of Virginia, the congregations in Roanoke and Botetourt were joined with the Synod of Western Virginia in the 1840's.¹⁰

The year 1842 was a landmark year in Lutheran development. Christopher C. Baughman, an 1839 graduate of Pennsylvania College, had become minister of a Lutheran Church in Jefferson, Maryland, in 1841; but because of a throat infection, he relinquished his pastoral post and moved south to Staunton where he indeed did experience an improvement in his health. Evidence seems clearly to indicate that Bittle, a Gettysburg classmate of Baughman, recognized Baughman's ability and invited him to settle in Staunton where Baughman could serve as a missionary to the local Lutheran population, a position that would leave the administrative responsibilities with Bittle. Largely because of these two men's association were sown the seeds of Roanoke College.¹¹

Bittle had for some time been interested in education. His involvement in the promotion of education among Lutherans has been noted by his active participation in the Education Society. He was deeply concerned about the urgency of securing qualified young men to fill Lutheran pulpits in vacant churches and in areas where churches

needed to be established. In addition, Bittle was concerned about providing educational opportunities beyond the primary level to the young men in his parish.¹²

With the arrival of Baughman, Bittle apparently saw the opportunity to effect his educational desires. Shortly after Baughman's arrival in October, 1842, a classical school, Virginia Institute, was in operation at the Mt. Tabor home of Bittle. Baughman taught three days a week; Bittle two. The fact that Bittle taught two days a week certainly indicates he had the approval of his congregation. Thus there is little doubt that the local Lutheran population supported the unchartered, nameless institution.¹³

No records are extant about the institution's opening, and one historian surmises none were kept since the institution was a private endeavor launched experimentally to test the response and support that might be available within and near the local parish. Visualizing their experiment as a real necessity, the two men encouraged the representatives attending the May, 1843, meeting of the Virginia Synod at Woodstock to support the operation of the classical institution.¹⁴

On May 8, the Synod resolved to "decline urging any further action on the subject."¹⁵ Yet before the meeting adjourned that day the Synod had decided to assume a more positive attitude, reflecting the influence of the Reverends Bittle and Baughman, Captain George Shuey from Mt. Tabor and Mr. Paul Sieg from Churchville. The

resolution as adopted read:

Resolved, that Synod approve of the proposed plan, relative to the establishment of a classical institution within the bounds of this Synod; that a committee be appointed to examine the document referred in the preceding resolution, and hand it over to Synod with such corrections and improvements as they shall deem expedient. The committee appointed are Rev. Messrs. 16 Rude, Bittle, and Miller, and Messrs. Piper and Sieg.

The next day the committee submitted the following report:

The destitution occasioned for want of a suitable ministry in many portions of our church, has been a subject of deep regret and anxiety for many years to those interested in her welfare; and in no section has our church suffered more from this destitution, than in the State of Virginia. With all the efforts made heretofore to increase the number of our ministers, we have been unsuccessful, even in supplying our congregations already organized, so that many have been entirely scattered and can never again be reorganized, whilst others have been so enfeebled and distracted, that unless speedily furnished with ministers, they ere long must dwindle away. Besides, in many places throughout the State of Virginia, the people are favorable to, if not already members of, the Lutheran branch of the church; and, consequently, would now readily unite with it, from preferring its doctrines, government, etc., to any other. This is especially the case in many parts of Western Virginia, where the destitute condition of the people is very great. In order, if possible, to supply this destitution, we would suggest the propriety of establishing and maintaining a classical institution, under the supervision of the two Lutheran Synods of Virginia, in which our young men could, at least, be prepared for an advanced class in college; this institution to be conducted in such a manner that the students would incur as little pecuniary expense as possible. We are fully persuaded that such an establishment would afford special inducements to pious young men to devote themselves to the gospel ministry, who, on account of the want of such an institution within the bounds of the Synods of Virginia, are prevented from so doing; and probably will continue so. In proof of the correctness of the statement made, we refer to the fact that a school is at present in operation at Mt. Tabor congregation, under the supervision of Rev. C. C. Baughman,

as Principal and teacher of ancient languages, and Rev. D. F. Bittle, teacher of mathematics; and although it has been in operation but a short time, yet several students have already been obtained, and there are encouraging prospects of increasing their number considerably by the commencement of the next scholastic term, the 1st of August. In view of these considerations, we would recommend to the attention of Synod, the establishment of a classical institution.¹⁷

After proper consideration of the various parts of the resolution, it was adopted. The Synod also approved the committee's recommendation "that the Synod of Western Virginia be invited to participate and co-operate with this Synod in the establishment and support of the proposed institution."¹⁸

Once the Synod had agreed to the idea of establishing the institution, a location had to be determined. Apparently only two sites were considered, Churchville or Mt. Tabor, both of which were in Bittle's parish. After representatives from each area advanced the reasons the school should be located in their vicinity, a vote was taken resulting in the selection of Mt. Tabor.¹⁹

The Virginia Synod further elected Baughman to present their resolution supporting a classical institute at the June meeting of the Western Virginia Synod.

He stated that the principal aim of the founders of the Institute was to offer such indigent young men, as intended to prepare for the ministry, in the bounds of their own Synod, every advantage to obtain a classical education, preparatory to the study of theology.²⁰

After proper consideration, the Western Virginia Synod resolved to accept the invitation of the Virginia Synod to support and participate in an institute to be located in the Shenandoah Valley.²¹

In less than one year the little private Lutheran venture of Bittle and Baughman had become the official institution endorsed by the two Lutheran Synods in the state. This, however, did not mean financial splendor; and had it not been for local Lutheran generosity, the institute probably would have had a short tenure.²²

Captain George Shuey contributed funds toward the erection of a building, and Benjamin F. Hailman donated an acre of land midway between his home and that of Bittle. During the summer months two simple log buildings were erected--one a classroom and library, the other a dormitory and refectory.²³

In the July 6, 1843, edition of the Staunton, Virginia, Spectator and General Advertiser appeared an advertisement signed by Benjamin F. Hailman, Secretary of the Board. This seems to be the only available reference to a Board, as the minutes of the Synod give no indication of the appointment of one. The notice stated that the scholastic year would be divided into two sessions, five months each, commencing August 1. The Rev. C. C. Baughman, A. M. was Principal; the Rev. D. F. Bittle, A. M., Assistant. Fees were modest: \$15 for tuition, per session, and \$6 for boarding. That religion was important was important may be noted from the opening statement citing the college's location as being "in a healthy, moral neighborhood."²⁴

In closing the advertisement stated:

Particular attention will be paid to the moral character of students. They will attend service at the Church on Sabbath morning and a Bible recitation²⁵ in the afternoon, conducted by the Principal.

No official records are available until April 11, 1845, when the Board of Trustees first met following the institution's incorporation; invaluable assistance is derived from the records of the institution's literary society, the Philomathean Society, beginning September 2, 1843. The names of the eighteen students and most addresses enable us to see the geographical area served by the college. No less than eight were from Augusta County alone; and perhaps all but one were from adjacent counties.²⁶

In April, 1844, Baughman attended the Virginia Synod meeting in Winchester. The minutes indicated the Synod was pleased with the progress of the institute and convinced that the institution would provide the desired training to young men who would later enter the ministry. There can be little doubt that Bittle and Baughman visualized the program at Virginia Institute as preparatory for admission to Gettysburg College where graduates of the Institute could conclude their junior and senior years.²⁷

As the success of the school's operation became obvious, its supporters realized the importance of securing an act of incorporation. Without that the Board could not legally operate the school, nor could it own real estate. Therefore Bittle solicited the aid of

Chesley Kenney, a Staunton attorney, to draft a petition requesting the Virginia state legislature to incorporate the institute as the Virginia Collegiate Institute. Endorsed by eight Augusta residents and supported by Augusta County's legislators in the House of Delegates and Senate, the petition was introduced in the House on December 20, 1844.²⁸

On January 30, 1845, the bill to incorporate Virginia Collegiate Institute was adopted.²⁹ Included among the original trustees were Paul Seig, Benjamin Hailman, George Shuey, David T. Bittle, and C. C. Baughman. The composition of the board reveals three clergymen and three laymen from the Synod of Western Virginia, seven clergymen and five laymen from the Virginia Synod, and five other laymen, also with Lutheran affiliations.³⁰

Between the institute's chartering on January 30, 1845, and the first official meeting of the board on April, an event occurred that reflected the soundness of the institute's foundation--Bittle resigned his pastorate to accept a new position near Ellerton, Maryland. No records reveal a rift between Bittle and Baughman or Bittle and other board members or even a pastoral controversy; thus one can only speculate that personal considerations contributed to the decision. Indeed, Bittle attended and actively participated in the April board meeting.³¹

On April 11, 1845, the board officially met in the Institute Building. Although the charter required twelve to be present before an election could be conducted, the assemblage of ten trustees and one

visitor appointed a committee of three to nominate officers. The committee, which included Bittle and Baughman, recommended nominees who were unanimously, though illegally, elected. The Rev. C. C. Baughman was unanimously elected Principal, and he elected the Rev. A. P. Ludden as his assistant.³² In other business the board adopted a resolution introduced by Bittle which obligated each board member "to furnish one student to this Institution, and become responsible for his tuition for five successive years, with the privilege of sending a student five years within the next ten."³³ Tuition for the session was fixed at \$30.00, to be paid in advance; and "the principal was authorized to sell five scholarships at sixty dollars, \$60.00, each, entitling the purchaser to three years' tuition."³⁴

When the board next met on July 25, they examined the charter and realized the election of officers held at the previous meeting was illegal. They revoted, selecting a new Secretary to replace Gideon Sherer who resigned from the board; the board then selected his replacement. The trustees further directed three of its members, Shuey, Kinney and Pomts, "to procure a title to the land on which the Buildings of the institution are situated."³⁵ There is no record that such a report was made by this committee.

Although the institute no longer enjoyed the leadership or presence of Bittle, it continued to operate. The minutes of the Philomathean Society reveal a student population of fourteen in

1845-46, seven less than the preceding year; and in 1846-47 the society's records indicate a student population of only ten.³⁶

Aware of enrollment problems, the board by a vote of seven to five resolved at its meeting on December 31, 1846, "That Virginia Collegiate Institute be removed from its present location to the Town of Salem in the County of Roanoke, Virginia."³⁷ The removal was to take place on or before June 1, 1847. The choice of Salem as the institute's new home was predicated upon several reasons: (1) its beautiful location in a rural environment, an appropriate setting in which to mold the minds of young men; (2) its proximity to Roanoke, the area's major urban center; and (3) its central geographic position among the German settlers, who would be the base of support.³⁸

To raise funds to purchase a site in Salem and to finance the move, the board selected a committee to negotiate the sale of the institute's property and buildings; and it further:

authorized the sale of Forty Scholarships at fifty dollars each, entitling the purchaser to three year's tuition in Virginia Collegiate Institute--the money in all cases to be paid strictly in advance. The Board further advised that any indigent young men, of approved piety and ability, having the ministry view, might be permitted to purchase a three year's scholarship on the terms specified above.³⁹

While there was no stipulation that indigent Lutherans would be given preferential treatment, it might be reasonably assumed. Examination of John B. Davis' report to the Virginia Synod in the 1840's indicates the special position held by Lutherans toward the institute. As

president of the Synod, Davis expressed this view:

This school, though by no means sectarian, has been brought into existence by members of this Synod, and continues to be managed by them, hence the Synod should feel bound to employ its influence in securing to it permanent patronage.⁴⁰

Apparently no financial inducement or property grant was solicited from or offered by Salem's inhabitants prior to the decision to relocate the institute in the town. No Lutheran Church stood in the community; therefore, local Lutheran denominational clout was obviously nonexistent in the town proper. However, the area certainly was populated by numerous Lutheran families who would support the institute's new location. A committee of five--Reverend Gideon Scherer, Michael Miller, George W. Rader, Doctor John H. Griffin and John Kizer--was appointed by the board "to procure suitable buildings in Salem."⁴¹ Griffin and Kizer were both Salem inhabitants and members of the Lutheran denomination.⁴²

Until permanent quarters could be secured for the institute, the Building Committee obtained a deserted, deteriorating Baptist church which was renovated as a temporary home for Virginia Collegiate Institute. Shortly afterwards an agreement was reached between the Building Committee and a local citizen; William C. Williams, to purchase four acres of land at \$100 per acre. This was to become the nucleus of Roanoke College's present location.⁴³

On April 14, 1848, the Board of Trustees assembled in Salem at the counting-room of John Kizer and adopted the rules of governance

for the institution.⁴⁴ Regarding religious requirements, all students were required to attend morning and evening prayer services conducted by one of the instructors. While students could attend a church of their parents' choice on Sunday, they were also required to attend "a Biblical recitation"⁴⁵ on that day conducted by one of the institute's instructors. The potential influence of the Lutheran denomination upon the religious views of the institute's students seems obvious.⁴⁶

The Building Committee reported that the permanent brick edifice being constructed on the four acre plot purchased from William C. Williams was to be ready for occupancy by the fall session (1848).⁴⁷

The 1847-48 winter session was held on the first floor of the two-storied Presbyterian Church; and on May 24, 1848, the summer session commenced in the Baptist Church which had been renovated enough to hold classes during warm weather. The attendance at this session is unknown, except that it included the six young men who had accompanied Mr. Baughman from Mt. Tabor.⁴⁸

By July sufficient progress had been made on the institution's permanent residence to permit occupancy; the Lutheran Observer reported a communication from Christopher Baughman who stated the summer enrollment was thirty-four and that the institute "exerts an important influence for good upon the interests of our Church in this state."⁴⁹

The four-storied structure, while aesthetically modest, must have been an imposing sight near the Court House; and area Lutherans surely would have been proud to be part of this noble venture and offer financial assistance to insure its continuance.⁵⁰

During 1848-49 the institute published its first catalog. Included in its eight pages were lists of students, faculty and the Board of Trustees. The curriculum, texts, fees and general explanatory information, rules and regulations were also stated. Baughman was assisted by his brother-in-law, J. Edward Herbst, also a graduate of Gettysburg College; because of the institution's pecuniary drought, Herbst lived with Baughman and received no pay. Undoubtedly, despite his Lutheran beliefs, he decided to leave and join the California goldseekers in 1849. He was replaced by S. Carson Wells, of Frederick County, Virginia, a recent graduate of Pennsylvania College; Wells continued to serve as first assistant until the institute became a college. In 1851 the institute's improved financial position permitted the employment of a second assistant, the Rev. William F. Greaves, of Augusta County, Virginia, also a graduate of Pennsylvania College. During the 1852-53 session he accepted a call to a church and was replaced by the Rev. Reuben Hill, a Pennsylvania graduate of Pennsylvania College.⁵¹

Two others, Edmund Miller of Roanoke County and Simeon Scherer of North Carolina, served as teaching assistants during these years; both became Lutheran ministers, but their tenures were for only a part of a session.⁵²

Between 1848 and 1852 the enrollment ranged from thirty-eight in 1849-50 to sixty in 1851-52. Of the thirty-eight enrolled in 1849-50, fourteen were preparing for the ministry; of the sixty enrolled in the 1851-52 session, twenty were preparing for the ministry. Lutherans at the meeting of the Synod of Southwestern Virginia in September, 1850, heard the President exclaim:

It is with unfeigned gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, that I again commend to your especial consideration, our 'Institute' located at Salem, Virginia. This close association of the church with the institute cannot be minimized; indeed the church and college continue to exercise close ties.⁵³

Significant physical changes occurred between 1849 and 1852 which attested the institute's growth. Four more acres were purchased to the north of the campus, on which Mr. Baughman built a home; front and back porticos and a west wing were added to the main building, the present college's administration building; and a two-story frame dining hall was constructed behind the main building.⁵⁴

By 1852 students and area residents began discussing the desirability of elevating the institute to collegiate status. Successfully the Virginia Collegiate Institute had supplied Gettysburg College and other collegiate institutions with qualified applicants; now interest grew to have Virginia Collegiate "arrive at the full blaze of its meridian splendor."⁵⁵

On October 12 the Virginia Synod resolved:

That this Synod deem it expedient to recommend to the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Collegiate Institute to take immediate steps for amending the charter of said Institute, as to secure to it the right of conferring degrees, and exercising such other powers as shall place it upon a footing of equal standing with other Colleges in the State.⁵⁶

On November 25, 1852, a group of students appointed a committee to draft a petition to present to the Board of Trustees urging the Board to apply for a charter elevating Virginia Collegiate Institute to collegiate status. On December 3, the petition was approved by the students and submitted to Mr. Baughman for his approval. After an initial negative reaction, Mr. Baughman agreed to submit the petition to the Board when the students indicated they would not return the next session if he failed to carry out their request.⁵⁷

At a special meeting held January 22, 1853, in the Institute Building, the Board appointed Messrs. Baughman, John P. Kizer and Nathaniel Burwell to serve as a Committee to apply for a college charter in behalf of the Board.⁵⁸ No doubt the major factor contributing to the Board's decision to request the General Assembly "to erect this Institution into a College"⁵⁹ was the recommendation of such action by the Lutheran Synod of Virginia. One should note that examination of the Board of Trustees indicates almost one-half were Lutheran Ministers; therefore, when the Synod recommended, the position of the Board would be significantly influenced by the Synod's position.⁶⁰

The Board's decision to apply for a charter was a landmark event in Lutheran education in Virginia. Until 1853 Lutherans who desired collegiate educations had to choose one of the existing state public or denominational institutions or go to Pennsylvania. The desire for a Lutheran collegiate institution located in Virginia was strong. The Synod of Western Virginia had informed its members during the institute's 1849-50 session that:

Here is an Institution in our own State, in the bounds of our own Synod, and under the auspices of our own Church, in which our sons may receive such an education as may prepare them for any office or service within the gift of Church or State. Here they are free from those contaminations and immoralities which they might imbibe in other and more distant localities.⁶¹

Financial support from the Education Society of the Virginia Synod and well-to-do Lutherans wedded the institution close to the denomination. Columns of the Lutheran Observer during these years attest to the support of area Lutheran families; no doubt many of the contributions were solicited through the efforts of Baughman and Simeon Scherer, the institute's paid financial agent. Reporting in the April 19, 1850, issue of the Lutheran Observer, Scherer noted "that the Virginia Collegiate Institute is as emphatically the institution of the Lutheran Church as is Pennsylvania College, . . ."⁶² The influence of the institute on the organization of Lutherans in the Salem area ultimately led to the formation in December, 1852, of College Lutheran Church to meet the demands of area Lutherans who could not be adequately served by the institute's

small chapel. In turn this organized body of area Lutherans served as an influential, supportive group for the institute.⁶³

Once the Board had resolved to apply for a college charter, they considered several proposed names for the new college. After shunning such names as Virginia College, Madison College and Wartburg College, the Board agreed on the name Roanoke. The Committee conferred with Mr. John McCauley, a Salem resident, and member of the House of Delegates from Roanoke County. On March 14, 1853, the General Assembly ratified the charter;⁶⁴ Virginia Lutherans now had a college and could educate their sons in the tenets of Lutheran ideals. Baughman, the cornerstone of Virginia Collegiate Institute, preferred to be involved in secondary education and resigned to accept a position as principal of Hagerstown Female Seminary. To lead the new college, the Board selected the Rev. David F. Bittle who had been the founding father of Virginia Institute and who had been serving Lutheran churches in Maryland since his departure from Virginia in 1845.⁶⁵

Returning to Virginia as Roanoke College's first president gave the new institution a man whose Lutheran leadership was renown and respected. This position was made evident in 1854; Dr. Bittle and his two assistants printed An Appeal to the German Population of Virginia and Adjacent States which clearly stated the Lutheran position:

...
 We, the descendents of a German ancestry, amidst these cheering views, have a responsibility to meet, to maintain the name and distinction that are due to us as a people, who have ever given their influence in determining the destiny of our country, and the condition of the church.

...
 Roanoke College we believe is adapted to the wants of our people.

...
 The majority of the students connected with this college since it has been chartered have been pious young men. And the aim is, as far as possible by a mild discipline to keep the institution free from immorality and bring the students under religious influence.

...
 Oh! that we could get pious, and intelligent men, to preach to our people; other churches have intelligent, active men, and we must have them too. . . .⁶⁶

In 1903 the college celebrated its semi-centennial. An address was delivered on the occasion by William McCauley, a distinguished graduate of the institution's Class of 1859. In his remarks he noted the college was "primarily established and sustained for the advancement of the interests of the church of the Reformation,"⁶⁷ a testimony that certainly held true fifty years earlier.

The pride of Lutherans toward their institution may be attested in a statement written by D. F. Bittle, May 3, 1872. "The Lutheran population of Virginia are awakening to the claims of education so that we have twice as many Lutheran students in attendance than we ever had at one time."⁶⁸ He further observed that more than half were preparing for the ministry, a testimony to the college's principal purpose.

The chartering of Roanoke College in 1850 marked the end of the founding of permanent denominational colleges in Virginia before the Civil War. While other colleges were chartered and sometimes established before 1861, they did not survive.⁶⁹

The coming of the War created concerns for survival and submerged the ability for these or other denominations to establish colleges. Thus ended an exclusive era of college founding for white males by Virginia Protestants.

Chapter VI: Footnotes

¹Edmund Jacob Wolf, The Lutherans in America (New York: J. A. Hill and Company, 1890), p. 205; C. W. Cassell, W. J. Finck, and Elon O. Henkel, editors, History of the Lutheran Church in Virginia and East Tennessee (Strasburg, Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing House, Inc., 1930), pp. 82-84, 96-99.

²William Edward Eisenberg, The First Hundred Years: Roanoke College 1842-1942 (Strasburg, Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing House, Inc., 1942), p. 15. Cassell, Lutheran Church in Virginia, p. 287.

³Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 15.

⁴The use of the term "Gynasium" reflects the influence of German scholarship on the institution and its program of studies.

⁵Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 17.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 18.

⁹Ibid., pp. 18-19.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 20.

¹¹The Roanoke Collegian, Salem, Virginia, January, 1875.

¹²Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 21.

¹³Ibid., pp. 20-22; 1853-1903 Semi-Centennial Celebration and Commencement of Roanoke College June 7-11, 1903 (Salem, Virginia: Published by the College, 1903, Address by William McCauley, A. M. (Class of 1859)), pp. 75-76.

¹⁴The Roanoke Collegian, May, 1875; Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, pp. 22-23.

¹⁵Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 23.

- ¹⁶Ibid., Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, pp. 76-77.
- ¹⁷Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, pp. 24-25.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 25.
- ¹⁹Ibid., Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 77.
- ²⁰Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 25.
- ²¹Ibid., pp. 25-26.
- ²²Ibid., pp. 26-27.
- ²³Ibid., p. 27.
- ²⁴Spectator and General Advertiser, Staunton, Virginia, July 6, 1843.
- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Minutes, Philomathean Society, 1843.
- ²⁷Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 78; Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 29.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 31; Petition "To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Virginia Convened in Senate and Assembly," December 20, 1844.
- ²⁹Acts of the General Assembly passed in Richmond, Virginia: William F. Ritchie, Printer, 1845.
- ³⁰Ibid., Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, pp. 34-35.
- ³¹Ibid., pp. 35-37; Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Virginia Collegiate Institute, April 11, 1845.
- ³²Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 11, 1845; This appointment reflects Bittle's decision to disassociate himself from teaching responsibilities at the institution.
- ³³Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 11, 1845.
- ³⁴Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 11, 1845.
- ³⁵Minutes, Board of Trustees, July 25, 1845.

- ³⁶Minutes, Philomathean Society, 1845-46; 1846-47.
- ³⁷Minutes, Board of Trustees, December 31, 1846.
- ³⁸Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 81.
- ³⁹Minutes, Board of Trustees, December 31, 1846.
- ⁴⁰Annual Report of the Virginia Synod of the Lutheran Church, 1845.
- ⁴¹Minutes, Board of Trustees, December 31, 1846.
- ⁴²Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, pp. 44-45.
- ⁴³Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 14, 1848.
- ⁴⁴Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 14, 1848.
- ⁴⁵Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 14, 1848. Catalogue, Course of Instruction EC. (sic) of Virginia Collegiate Institute Located in Salem, Roanoke, County, Virginia (Baltimore: T. New Man Kurtz, Bookseller, 1850), p. 8.
- ⁴⁶Minutes, Board of Trustees, April 14, 1848.
- ⁴⁷Ibid.
- ⁴⁸Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 46; The Roanoke Collegian, January, 1875.
- ⁴⁹Lutheran Observer, July, 1848, in First Hundred Years, p. 52.
- ⁵⁰Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 47.
- ⁵¹Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, pp. 82-83; Catalogue, Course of Instruction EC. (sic) of Virginia Collegiate Institute Located in Salem, Roanoke County, Virginia, 1848-49; The Roanoke Collegian, January 1, 1875.
- ⁵²Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 84.
- ⁵³Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 83; The Roanoke Collegian, January, 1875.
- ⁵⁴Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 57; Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 84.

- ⁵⁵ Annual Report, Synod of Southwest Virginia, September, 1850.
- ⁵⁶ Minutes, Special Meeting, Board of Trustees, January 22, 1853; Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 67.
- ⁵⁷ The Roanoke Collegian, January, 1875; Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, pp. 67-68; In his report to the Virginia Synod dated February 15, 1851, Gideon Sherer, agent for the institute, concluded "that the Virginia Collegiate Institute is as emphatically the institution of the Lutheran Church as is Pennsylvania College," Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, pp. 60-61.
- ⁵⁸ Minutes, Board of Trustees, January 22, 1853; Nathaniel Burwell was a resident of Salem and the largest slave owner in Roanoke County. Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 71.
- ⁵⁹ Minutes, Board of Trustees, January 22, 1853.
- ⁶⁰ Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 86; Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 67.
- ⁶¹ Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 58.
- ⁶² Lutheran Observer, April 19, 1850.
- ⁶³ Eisenberg, First Hundred Years, p. 60.
- ⁶⁴ The Roanoke Collegian, February, 1875; Semi-Centennial, p. 85; Acts of the General Assembly Passed in 1852-53 (Richmond, Virginia: William F. Ritchie, Printer, 1853), pp. 238-239.
- ⁶⁵ Minutes, Board of Trustees, June 3, 1853.
- ⁶⁶ D. F. Bittle, S. Carson Wells, and H. G. Hoxar, An Appeal to the German Population of Virginia and Adjacent States (Salem, Virginia: W. N. Wilson, Printer, 1854).
- ⁶⁷ Semi-Centennial, Roanoke College, p. 82.
- ⁶⁸ Letter by D. F. Bittle, President of Roanoke College, May 3, 1872, Ms. Roanoke College.
- ⁶⁹ Twenty-two of the thirty-two colleges chartered in Virginia prior to the Civil War did not survive, indicating a mortality rate of 69 percent. Tewksbury, Founding of Colleges and Universities, p. 28.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

Examination of the events relating to the founding of the permanently established denominational colleges in Virginia between the Revolution and the Civil War reveals several similar characteristics. First, each of these colleges was established by a Protestant denomination primarily to prepare young men interested in the ministry of the founding denomination; these groups were also interested, in varying degrees, in providing educational opportunities for other young men who might assume leadership in society and within the church. Second, each of these colleges was anxious to control the governance of their respective college or colleges by appointing a majority of the membership of the governing boards from the clergy and laity of their own denomination. By thus enjoying denominational majorities on the first boards, they hoped to perpetuate denominational control. Third, each of these institutions believed its modus operandi, under the leadership of a board and faculty committed to the tenets of that particular denomination, to be the best for young college seeking men who belonged to that denomination. In consequence, denominational pride created a rivalry among the institutions, and in

the early years this rivalry probably limited the number of students or faculty from other denominations in attendance at each college.

When each of the colleges received its charter, the legislature, in the spirit of religious freedom and separation of church and state, prohibited the establishment of theological departments; and the names for the institutions generally reflected the new spirit of liberty or local pride rather than religious association. Despite charter restrictions the colleges were firmly under the control of each denomination, and college policy and student life reflected religious activities peculiar to respective denominations. Indeed at Bethany, the Bible was a text, which one might assume was interpreted by Campbell and his disciples pursuant to the tenets of the Disciples of Christ. At Emory and Henry, Creed Fulton proposed the establishment of the Wesleyan Professorship of Moral Science; the holder of this position would be a Methodist who would teach the sons of Methodist ministers. At Richmond College, ministerial students could receive free tuition while others were required to pay in full.

Limited to white males, all of the colleges suffered enrollment difficulties in an era when the state already operated enough colleges to serve the needs of its college-age population. With the exception of Bethany College, finances seemed to be a significant problem; undoubtedly through the largess and generosity of that institution's founder and principal benefactor, Alexander Campbell, Bethany experienced less severe financial problems than the others.

In all seven colleges, the principal founder was a minister of that denomination: Brown at Washington College, Rice and Smith at Hampden-Sydney, Leigh at Randolph-Macon, Baptist at Richmond, Campbell at Bethany, Fulton at Emory and Henry and Bittle at Roanoke. These men sought and gained the support of area clergy and businessmen, thus creating a degree of local support for the colleges.

Each of the institutions was located in a rural area, a fact that attests to the widely held view that cities were the centers of corruption, vice, and immorality and were inappropriate as sites for a college. Eventually, Richmond College fell within the corporate boundaries of a large city, but that was the result of urban growth rather than specific planning to that effect.

Three of the seven permanently founded denominational colleges had their origins as academies, or secondary schools, and two began as seminaries to train ministers. Washington College, Hampden-Sydney, and Roanoke all began their operations as classical academies before receiving their collegiate charters. Richmond and Emory and Henry opened as seminaries before incorporating as colleges. Only Randolph-Macon and Bethany received charters to incorporate prior to their actual establishment and operation, and some have asserted a connection between Randolph-Macon and a classical academy in Brunswick County founded in the eighteenth century by Methodists, although available materials do not seem to substantiate that position.

The desire to operate denominational colleges also reflected the attitude that education should be conducted under religious

auspices. Campbell, in his articles published in the Millennial Harbinger, noted the importance of religion and religious study as essential to a total educational program. Similar views were held by the college officials at most institutions founded by religious denominations in nineteenth century America.

The proliferation in the founding of denominational colleges in Virginia between the Revolution and the Civil War can only be explained by recognizing the religious and political environment in the new nation. Committed to freedom of religion, the nation was a grid for any proselytizing religious group. Thus, the founding of colleges sympathetic to the tenets of denominational interests was a logical consequence of religious freedom. In Virginia the disestablishment of the Anglican Church launched an era of college founding that was typical in other states.

The beginning of the Civil War in 1861 brought to a close the exclusive era of college founding for white males by Protestant groups. After the war the interests of blacks, women, and the clamor for more public education were to influence the establishment of institutions to accommodate the collegiate desires of larger, more diverse groups in Virginia and the nation. Like other southern states, post-war Virginia was different; her social, economic and political traditions had been shattered. The collegiate goals of Virginia after the war had to be adjusted to new social, economic and political systems

Suggestions for Further Research

Ironically, the freedom to join a group whose beliefs were acceptable to the individual or to organize a new denomination--as in the case of the Disciples of Christ--may have produced intradenominational rivalry injurious to the advancement and well-being of each denomination's collegiate desires. For example, rivalry among Methodists in Southwest Virginia and those in Eastern Tennessee over moving Holston Seminary from New Market, Tennessee, to the Abingdon, Virginia area may have related to the small contribution made by Methodists in Eastern Tennessee to the new institution. Another example of this intradenominational squabbling was among Baptists who split over whether or not their seminary should be incorporated as a liberal arts collegiate institution. There is some evidence that intradenominational rivalry may have been just as intense as interdenominational rivalry. While the author did not examine in detail this postulate, future research could possibly indicate that this internal dissension negatively affected the vitality of some of these higher educational ventures.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

The author utilized several general secondary sources about religion and education to assist in perceiving Virginia's denominational college founding between 1776 and 1861 as a movement within the state and among the states in the newly established nation. Noteworthy among these were Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America, 1965; Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University, 1962; Donald G. Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War, published in 1932; and Sadie Bell, The Church, The State and Education in Virginia, 1930.

Histories of the individual colleges were helpful in directing the writer to primary sources. While some may seem excessively laudatory on occasion, they are attempts to present general histories of the institutions. Three significant institutional histories are available: George J. Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, A History of Emory and Henry College, 1963; William Edward Eisenberg, The First Hundred Years: Roanoke College, 1842-1942, 1942; and Richard Irby, History of Randolph-Macon College, Virginia, c. 1900. A fourth institutional history, William K. Woolery, Bethany Years: The Story of Old Bethany From Her Founding Years Through a Century of Trial and Triumph, 1941, was utilized to a lesser extent.

Church histories, studies compiled by graduate students and scholarly articles provided valuable general information, particularly about those colleges having no institutional histories. Significant among these materials were William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical, 1966, information on Presbyterian educational efforts; Delemo L. Beard, "Origin and Early History of Presbyterianism in Virginia," 1932, a doctoral dissertation at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia; William Warren Sweet, Virginia Methodism--A History, 1940; Perry E. Gresham, The Sage of Bethany: A Pioneer in Broadcloth, 1960, a biographical study of Alexander Campbell highlighting his religious contributions; and two articles on Baptist efforts to establish Richmond College by W. Harrison Daniel published in the Virginia Baptist Register, 1966 and 1970.

The Religious Herald, a newspaper published by the Baptists of Virginia, indicated the attitudes of prominent clergymen and laymen on the subject of higher education during the 1830's when need for a college was being debated. The Roanoke Collegian published by Roanoke College contained historical sketches of the efforts of that denomination to establish a college; these sketches appeared during 1875.

Church records are the most important primary sources about the denominational colleges. Minutes on file of the Hanover Presbytery at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, contain valuable information about the Presbyterians' interest in education in Virginia.

Minutes of the Virginia Conference located at Randolph-Macon College and the Holston Conference at Emory and Henry College provide significant insight into the efforts of Methodists at Randolph-Macon and Emory and Henry Colleges respectively. Since Bethany College was largely the result of the efforts of Alexander Campbell, the Millennial Harbinger, a religious journal edited and published by Campbell between 1830 and 1864, provides valuable material about Campbell's personal views on education. As a founder of the Disciples of Christ, Campbell's views represent in essence the official position of that denomination. The minutes of the Virginia Baptist Education Society between 1830 and 1840 and proceedings of the Baptist General Association of Virginia during the same period contain documentation of the efforts of Virginia Baptists to establish an institution of higher education; these records are preserved by the Virginia Baptist Historical Association, University of Richmond, Virginia. The minutes of the Board of Virginia Collegiate Institute, located at Roanoke College, similarly are sources of information about Lutheran efforts to found Roanoke College.

Since the scope of this study did not extend beyond the founding of the colleges, the minutes of the boards of trustees preserved by each college were of less importance to this writer than to one writing comprehensive institutional histories. However, they were utilized as applicable.

Finally, state charters for each of the colleges may be found at the Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia; these charters indicate the legal structure and governance for each institution.

APPENDIX A

The academic debate between Hampden-Sydney and Washington and Lee as to which institution should be recognized as the older may be argued from both positions. Although the collegiate charter for Washington and Lee was not received until 1813,¹ a possibility exists that the delay was more political than educational. Records from Liberty Hall Academy substantiate that beginning in 1785 degrees were conferred upon students. The conflict over the charter verbage may be further considered by examining the charter of 1796 which renamed Liberty Hall Academy, Washington College,² and the charter of 1798 that rescinded the action.³ One might even speculate that the trustees of Hampden-Sydney College exercised more political clout than those at Liberty Hall Academy; men like Patrick Henry and James Madison certainly were more influential than any on the board at Liberty Hall. The fact that the state legislature named a new board in 1796 would seem further to substantiate this political embroglio, and indeed Graham's resignation in 1796 could have been related. Thus, one should examine the charters to determine collegiate status. Since Liberty Hall first conferred degrees, it (Washington and Lee) should be recognized as Virginia's second oldest college.

¹Acts of the Assembly, 1813, p. 90.

²Acts of the Assembly, 1796, p. 27.

³Acts of the Assembly, 1798, p. 26.

ABSTRACT

The Founding of the Permanent Denominational Colleges In Virginia, 1776-1861

In this study, selected events were examined relating to the chartering of each of the seven permanently chartered denominational colleges in Virginia between 1776 and 1861, and the interdenominational rivalry among the five Protestant groups engaged in college founding. Between 1776 and 1861, Presbyterians, Methodists, Disciples of Christ (Christians), Baptists, and Lutherans struggled to establish one or more institutions in Virginia primarily to train an educated ministry and civilian leadership that would be informed and committed to the respective denominational tenets and beliefs.

When the Revolution began in 1776 and Virginia declared its independence, the first steps were taken to disestablish the Anglican Church and to terminate its preferred position and that of its college, William and Mary. The Presbyterians, many of whom were leaders in the Revolutionary cause, were early rewarded for their loyalty and in 1782 were granted a charter which conferred collegiate status on an institution that became Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Within two months (January, 1783) a second Presbyterian College was granted a charter, Hampden-Sydney at Hampden-Sydney.

Not until the 1820's was any other denomination ready or seriously interested in college founding. In 1830 the Methodists launched their collegiate career by securing a charter to establish Randolph-Macon at Boydton (today, Ashland), and in 1839 western Methodists were issued a charter to establish Emory and Henry College at Emory. In 1840 the Disciples of Christ, an American born denomination, founded a college at Bethany (now in West Virginia); and that same year the Baptists received a charter for Richmond College near Richmond. The last of the pre-Civil War denominations to charter a collegiate institution was the Lutherans. In 1853 Roanoke College began operation in Salem.

Examination of the events and issues relating to the founding of the seven colleges indicates several similar characteristics: (1) Each of these colleges was established by a Protestant denomination primarily to prepare young white men interested in the ministry of the founding denomination; (2) In varying degrees each college envisioned its purpose also to educate other young men to assume civil leadership in the new republic; (3) Each college hoped to perpetuate its denominational posture by appointing a majority of the members of the boards of governance from their own clergy and laity; (4) Each college believed its environment (rural) and curriculum (basically classical) to be best suited for young college-seeking men who were members of that denomination; and (5) In consequence, denominational rivalry occurred among institutions and thus perpetuated strong denominational colleges in Virginia until the 20th century.

VITA

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